



ANNE THACKERAY RITCHIE, 1914  
From a drawing by John Sargent, R.A.

*Frontispiece*

# LETTERS OF ANNE THACKERAY RITCHIE

WITH FORTY-TWO ADDITIONAL LETTERS  
FROM HER FATHER  
WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

SELECTED AND EDITED BY HER DAUGHTER  
HESTER RITCHIE

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON  
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## PREFACE

IN making this selection from my mother's correspondence my aim has been to tell the story of her life. No memoir of her, however, would be complete without a full record of her early years. This is given in her own journal written at the age of seventeen, and in her father's letters where we find an account of his own and his children's daily life, his work, his outlook on the world, and his inner thoughts. My grandfather is seen from an entirely fresh point of view. So little is known, so little has ever been heard of his married life, that it has been decided to publish some of the letters expressing his devotion to his wife, and showing how great was the tragedy that deprived him and his children of her companionship and help. A few passages in which my grandfather alludes to his books, as well as the Christmas sermon to his children, were quoted by my mother in her Biographical Introductions. A word must be said about the copying of his letters. It has seemed of importance to transcribe them exactly as they were written with their amusing and unexpected spelling, contracted words, and peculiar punctuation. His letters to Mrs. Frederick Elliot and Miss Perry were given to me for publication by Mr. Arthur Elliot; I also thank my mother's other friends for all their help.

Of her letters to her father unfortunately only the two printed in this collection have been preserved. In these and in her early journal we see her power of

description and mastery over words, but not the depth of sympathy, the clear and wide vision, which are afterwards so striking. It was always a keen pleasure and rest to her to take up her pen and write to her friends. She did not require solitude, but she enjoyed writing surrounded by "eager life"—its noise and clatter. She gives no hint in her correspondence of the constant ill-health from which she suffered and how she

" . . . ever with a frolic welcome took  
The thunder and the sunshine."

To the last my mother was working for others, her mind remaining alert and brilliant. She writes: "Who says 'Youth's a stuff will not endure'? It lasts as long as we do, and is older than age. For those moments of eager life of seeing and being come back to us, and we babble of green fields and live amongst them to the very end"

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## PRINCIPAL DATES IN THE LIFE OF ANNE THACKERAY RITCHIE

1837. Born June 9th, at 18, Albion Street, Hyde Park.
1840. She was sent to Paris with her infant sister Minny, to be brought up by her grandparents.
1849. She and her sister returned to live with their father at 13, Young Street, Kensington.
1852. October 13th. Thackeray's first visit to America. His children stayed at Paris with their grandparents, during his six months' absence.
1855. October 8th. Thackeray's second visit to America. His children again went to their grandparents.
1862. She published her first book, "The Story of Elizabeth."<sup>1</sup>
1863. December 24th. The death of Thackeray.
1867. June 10th. The marriage of her sister Minny to Leslie Stephen.
1875. November 26th. The death of Minny Stephen.
1877. August 2nd. Her marriage to her second cousin Richmond Ritchie (third son of William Ritchie, Legal Member of the Council of the Governor-General of India), by whom she had one son and one daughter.
1903. She was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, and was the first woman to enjoy the distinction of being made a Member of the Academic Committee of the Society.
1906. August 8th. The marriage of her son to Margaret, second daughter of the Right Honourable Charles Booth, D.C.L., D.Sc., F.R.S.
- 1912-13. President of the English Association.
1912. October 12th. The death of her husband.
1919. February 26th. Her death at The Porch, Freshwater, Isle of Wight.

<sup>1</sup> For chronological list of books see Appendix.

# LETTERS OF ANNE THACKERAY RITCHIE

## I

1837—1840

ANNE ISABELLA, the eldest child of William Makepeace Thackeray, was born on June 9th, 1837, the year Queen Victoria came to the throne. She was christened Anne Isabella after her two grandmothers. Her godmother was Mrs. Sterling, wife of the *Times* "Thunderer" and mother of John Sterling.

One of the earliest recollections of her childhood, she would say, was the gift of a pair of red shoes from her godmother. She was then two years old; she has told me of the rapture she felt, and how she sat upon the floor and gazed at her shoes in speechless delight. Another remembrance she would describe, was the joy of being drawn along the streets in a little wooden go-cart by "Old John," an ancient family retainer who had followed her father from Devonshire to Great Coram Street.

Of her father and mother in these early days Anne Ritchie has written: "Almost the first time I can remember my parents was at home in Great Coram Street, on one occasion when my mother took me upon her back, as she had a way of doing, and after hesitating for a moment at the door, carried me into a ground floor room where some one sat bending over a desk.

"This some one lifted up his head, and looked round at the people leaning over his chair. He seemed pleased, smiled at us, but remonstrated.

"... Another impression remains to me of some place near Russell Square, of a fine morning, of

music sounding, of escaping from my nurse and finding myself dancing in the street to the organ with some other children.

"Someone walking by came and lifted me up bodily on to his shoulder and carried me away from the charming dance to my home which was close by. As we went along, this stranger as usual became my father whom I had not recognised at first.

"Then I can remember standing at his knee asking him to tell me the name of my doll, and my father said: 'This is Miss Polly Perkins I think.'

"I had a fine time of it. My mother used to give me chocolates and play prettier dance tunes even than the organs outside.... I was but little over two years old. I liked the world extremely at that age. The house seemed to me a splendid house upstairs and downstairs and there were organs constantly playing outside."<sup>1</sup>

William Makepeace Thackeray was twenty-five years of age and his wife twenty at the time of their marriage. He would sometimes tell his children that he lost his heart to their mother when he heard her sing. A lovely voice and perfection of technique distinguished her as a musician. She was Isabella Gethin Creagh Shawe, a daughter of Colonel Matthew Shawe, C.B., of Doneraile, Co. Cork. The marriage took place at the British Embassy in Paris on August 20, 1836.

Isabella Thackeray's portrait drawn by her husband at this time hangs in my brother's home. It is a water-colour sketch delicately tinted. The whole picture is very harmonious and serene. She stands erect, a small slight figure, dressed in the flowing draperies of the day.

Knowledge of her character can be gained from her own letters. One is struck by her gaiety and quickness of understanding, her gift for friendship, and the way in which all turned to her for advice, help and sympathy.

In a letter to Edward FitzGerald soon after his marriage, Thackeray says: "Dear Edward, do come

<sup>1</sup> See Biographical Introduction to *Hoggarty Diamond*.

and see me, it would do your heart good to see how happy I am."

And to his mother he writes : " DEAREST MOTHER,— Here is a short scrawl written at midnight, write to us plenty of long letters, though I repay them so badly, but they make me happy for the rest of the day. I am sure I love you better since I was married than before, perhaps it is because, being so happy, I am grown a little more *good*. God bless you dearest Mother. I am as well as possible and Isabella as well as can be expected.—W. M. T."

Thackeray's letters to his mother form almost a complete autobiography, so important a part did she play in his life and in the lives of his children.

Before her marriage, she was Anne Becher, a daughter of John Harman Becher, and was celebrated for her good looks. At sixteen she went out to India, became a "reigning beauty," and, to quote my mother's words, "was destined to be married, to be a mother, and a widow, and to be married again before a decade had gone by."<sup>1</sup> Her first husband, Richmond Thackeray, died at Calcutta in 1816; he was the father of her only child, William Makepeace Thackeray. In 1818 she married Major Henry Carmichael-Smyth of the Bengal Engineers. She lived to the age of seventy-two and died on the 18th of December, 1864. She was serious, fervent and deeply religious. She adored her son, but it was always a sorrow to her that upon certain questions of religion they did not see alike.

Early in 1837 Thackeray and his wife left Paris and came to London. In June my mother was born at 18, Albion Street, Hyde Park, the home of the Carmichael-Smyths.

Soon after the birth of his daughter, Thackeray moved to 13, Great Coram Street, Brunswick Square, where he spent the next three years. The illness of his wife in 1840 brought the home to an abrupt and cruel end.

How happy a home it was the old letters in our possession still tell, and it is from these letters chiefly written to Mrs. Carmichael-Smyth, that it is possible

<sup>1</sup> Biographical Introduction to *The Newcomes*.

to reconstruct a little the story of these early days and learn something of my mother's childhood.

The first mention of "Anny" occurs in the following letter which bears the postmark of 1839. She was then two years old, but seems already to be a personage, and to have taken her place in the world.

*Isabella Thackeray to Mrs. Carmichael-Smyth*

13, Great Coram Street

[1839].

Upstairs I can hear Anny playing with the squirrel and her "brooms to sell." She has very little childishness about her, not that she is beyond her years, but there seems a kind of reasonableness in all she does. Her love of pictures is very great and she can distinguish the forms of things ever so minute. I have been trying to teach her the names of colours but everything is either red or white. She knows not only the names of animals but the noise they make, so that when William called her a little donkey to-day she immediately began hee-haw hee-haw!

*Isabella Thackeray to her sister Jane Shawe*

[1839.]

Where do you think William, William Ritchie, and Charles and Arthur Buller and half-a-dozen others went to the other day? Do not scream—to a boxing match! and I had only ordered a leg of mutton for dinner and in they all poured at six o'clock, not the boxers but the gentlemen. "I gave them no encouragement my dear," said William, "but they would come," at which there was a hearty laugh as if they thought it a very good joke. Nothing suffered but the leg of mutton. I could not help thinking William and Arthur had been engaging in pugilistic exercises themselves, they ate like famished wolves.

. . . I wish you would give me a list of airs in *La Sonnambula*, I sang that one, that everyone

admires so much *Ah! non giunge uman pensiere.* I only like Bellini's solemn and plaintive music. Do you sing *Come per me sereno* and *Ah! non credea?*

Now what will you give me in return for this long letter? Another. In the meantime love to you and both our loves to Mama. William works hard all day.

In 1839 a second daughter was born, who died in infancy. This child left a tender and lasting memory. I have been told that my grandfather could never speak of her without emotion and that his eyes would fill with tears.

*W. M. Thackeray to Mrs. Carmichael-Smyth*

[1839.]

MY DEAREST MOTHER,—Isabella will tell you how we have been gadding to Gravesend, and how dear little Pussy enjoyed the trip; it was delightful and the wind and the sunshine have made me pleasantly tipsy as it were; for I am not used to them in London which generates sluggishness of body and often mind too.—I wish I could afford more frequent trips, one to Paris above all for profit as well as for pleasure, but it is not improbable that something may turn up to keep me in London for the whole of the Summer at least within reach of it.

What shall I say to you about our little darling who is gone?—I don't feel sorrow for her, and think of her only as something charming that for a season we were allowed to enjoy: When Anny was very ill, dying as I almost thought, it seemed to me wrong to pray for her life, for specific requests to God are impertinences I think, and all we should ask from him is to learn how to acquiesce and now I would be almost sorry—no that is not true—but I would not ask to have the child back again and subject her to the degradation of life and pain. O God watch over

us too, and as we may think that Your Great Heart yearns towards the innocent charms of these little infants, let us try and think that it will have tenderness for us likewise who have been innocent once, and have, in the midst of corruption, some remembrances of good still. Sometimes I fancy that at the judgement-time the little one would come out and put away the sword of the angry angel. I think her love for us and her beautiful purity would melt the Devil himself—nonsense, you know what I mean. We have sent to Heaven a little angel who came from us and loved us, and God will understand her language and visit us mildly—why write you this mad stuff, dearest Mother? God bless you and all besides. I shall write G. M.:<sup>1</sup> and thank her for her money and use it too.

Your afft.

W. M. T.

*W. M. Thackeray to Mrs. Carmichael-Smyth*

*Sunday, Monday, December 1, 2 [1839].*

MY ARREST MAMMY,—Isabella seems to have written an enormous letter to Mary,<sup>2</sup> and I suppose in all those pages and crosses has given you the whole news from Great Coram Street which amounts exactly to O. We have had a succession of pleasant yellow fogs: one to-day so bad that one can hardly see. We have led a tolerably sober and regular life, always up before nine, breakfast over by ten, books, books, books all day, until night when to my great consolation FitzGerald has been here to smoke a segar and keep me company until one or so.

Well, what else is there? Mrs. Brody<sup>3</sup> has gone to visit her relations at Wapping,—from six o'clock until 10 last night Miss Thackeray roared incessantly,

<sup>1</sup> G. M. = Grandmama.

<sup>2</sup> Mary Graham, a niece of Mrs. Carmichael-Smyth's.

<sup>3</sup> Anny's nurse.

which would have done your heart good to hear. I don't know what it was that appeased her, but at the expiration of these four hours the yowling stopped and Miss began to prattle as quietly and gaily as if nothing had happened. What are the mysteries of children? How are they moved, I wonder? I have made Anny lots of pictures, and really am growing quite a domestic character.

The little child is perpetually prattling about you all, and walks in the "Shondileasy" with "Ganny and Aunty and Polie" just as if she were in France instead of here. There's a great power of imagination about these little creatures, and a creative fancy and belief that is very curious to watch; it fades away in the light of common day: I am sure that horrid matter-of-fact child-rearers, Miss Edgeworth and the like, with their twopenny-halfpenny realities, do away with the child's most beautiful privilege. I am determined that Anny shall have a very extensive and instructive store of learning in Tom Thumbs, Jack-the-Giant-Killers, etc. What use is there in 'the paltry store of small facts that are stowed . . . se poor little creatures' brains?

I have just turned off a thundering article against Bulwer, and yesterday had the misfortune to read the *Comic Almanack*—anything worse or more paltry cannot well be imagined—it is as bad, very nearly, as the prints which illustrate it; and these are odious. Cruikshank I suppose is tired of the thing and bends all his energies to the illustrations of Jack Sheppard—I have not read this latter romance but one or two extracts are good; it is acted at *four* theatres, and they say that at the Cobourg people are waiting about the lobbies, selling *sheppard-bags*—a bag containing a few pick-locks that is, a screw-driver, and iron levers: one or two young gentlemen have already confessed how much they were indebted to Jack Sheppard who gave them ideas of pocket-picking and

thieving which they never would have had but for the play.

Since writing the above I have been out to take what they call fresh air here: and am come home half-choked with the fog: the darkness visible of Great Coram Street was the most ghastly thing I have seen for a long time. O for smiling Paris and sunshine! If I can make some decent engagement with a bookseller, I will pack off my traps, let the house again, and come somewhere at a decent distance from my dear old Mother. I have been reading a power of old newspapers and reviews concerning Napoleon, and very curious the abuse is of that character. Old Southey is one of the chief mudflingers and it is good to read the *Quarterly Review* that settles he was "no gentleman."

I wish you could get Carlyle's *Miscellaneous Criticism*, now just published in America. I have read a little in the book, a nobler one does not live in our language I am sure, and one that will have such an effect on our ways of thought and prejudices. Criticism has been a party matter with us till now, and literature a poor political Lackey—please God we shall begin ere long to love art for Art's sake. It is Carlyle who has worked more than any other to give it its independence.

Here are three pages of nothing as I promised. We propose to get up at eight to-morrow and are at this very minute in the act of going to bed. God bless my dearest Mother. Anny particularly told me to send her love and had proposed to write too. Love to all.

W. M. T.

*Isabella Thackeray to Mrs. Carmichael-Smyth*

13, Great Coram Street  
Dec. 1st, 1839.

. . . Arthur Buller has been here since Saturday, which I am glad of on William's account, he romps

with Anny like a second baby of two. You may suppose she is in high glee and exclaimed "Such a funny gemplem Papa." They figure away at cachucha's and mazurka's, she singing "Look how puty I dance!" and it is with great difficulty I can get her to bed. She talks a great deal about dear Granny and all at Paris. She has excellent reasoning faculties which *you* will believe though others might laugh.

To-day is a nice wholesome day with sunshine and Anny and I are going to pay visits. Did William tell you how she was invited to a party at the Kembles on Christmas day? She was such a little Queen. She was made much of by everybody, she danced and sang what she called her "totch song"—"Charley Charley."

*Isabella Thackeray to Mrs. Carmichael-Smyth*

[1839.]

. . . I need not tell you Anny wins everybody's heart. Mrs. John Kemble begged me to bring her to visit Miss Gertrude, who was very jealous of Anny and at last gave her two hard smacks on the head, to which looking greatly astonished she merely said "Why you spoil my pretty bonnet." Mrs. Kemble then taking her daughter behind the door did what she was correcting the child for doing, and Anny in the generosity of her heart forgetting her head, rushed after her saying "Don't hurt poor lickle girl." You see as I have little space I fill it with what chiefly concerns ourselves.

Anny dictates the following letter to you "I have a number of play-toys and have pleasure, pleasure's happy. I send Granny my loves, my loving loves."

*Isabella Thackeray to Mrs. Carmichael-Smyth*

*April 20 [1840].*

Here is Miss Anny—"Say I am very fond of writing. I have a great many play-toys and I send

my love to Granny and say I have been to the Zoololian gardens to-morrow." Did William tell you how she declared the rhinoceros's skin was tied on and that it was not smooth like her own?

William is full of his Dionysius. I want him to run no risks and be content with half profits, for it has yet to be proved that there will be profits. He says I am a *coward* but I think we are properly balanced. The engravers spoilt his designs in the most cruel manner. They are something in the style of M. Vieuxbois, and he proposes bringing twelve out for sixpence. I do not like to send you any until they are properly got up. It is a kind of pastime for William, for you know it gives him no trouble to sketch.

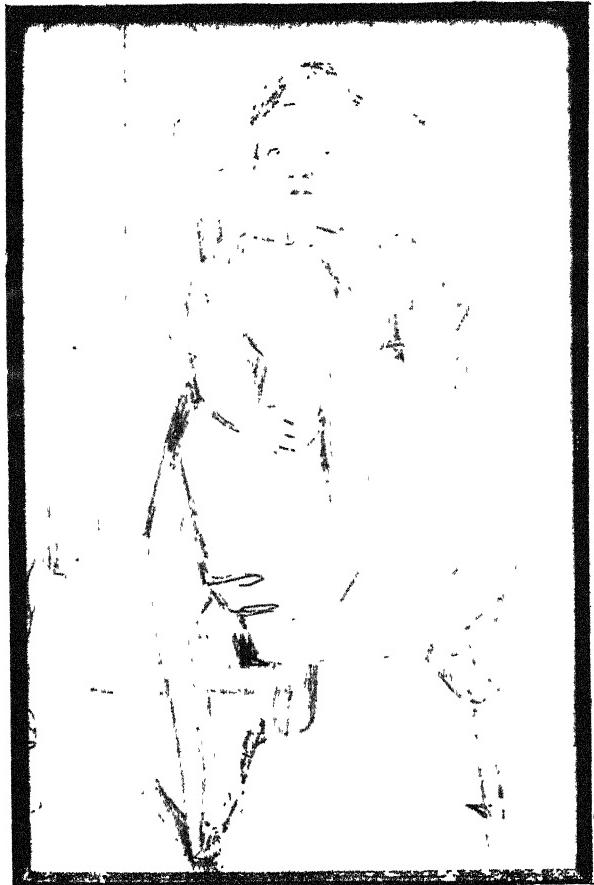
I am sure you are longing to hear more about Anny. We have been reading out loud, and you know how she will listen to the same story over and over and over again. Her great delight is to hear the History of Dame Hubbard and her dog, amplified by long conversations between the two which have to be invented. William was drawing little Red Riding Hood, but he was obliged to substitute a dog for the wolf for Anny got very angry at the notion of wolf eating up the grandmother with which true version Mrs. Dowling who was here would annoy her.

She now salutes her father with "What a funny fellow you are Papa!" She is delighted to be employed in carrying messages and knows every letter in the alphabet except E and F.

*W. M. Thackeray to Mrs. Carmichael-Smyth*

The Reform Club  
April 30 [1840].

MY DEAREST MAMMY,—Look at the stamp on my writing-paper and you will see to what a pitch of enjoyment I have been elevated. I came down here solely to have the pleasure of dating my letter from



ANNY AS A CHILD  
From a drawing by W. M. T.



Whitehall, and of knowing the day of the month, which is before me on a great card that these luxurious reformers alter with the day. Anny and I began a letter to you yesterday, her's was "Granny, Here is a letter. I wish my love some day to her. I been Zoologilan Gardens, see eflums and camelio leopards and monkeys and ostriches and everything." This is all Miss Thackeray's letter. She is very well this bright weather as is her Mamma, who will want consolation earlier than June as I fancy. Why won't my dearest Mammy come over for a month or so? She would be a great comfort to us, and who knows but we might at the end of the time take her back to Boulogne and there pass a summer month or two? Lettsom told me that you thought of coming, and surely it is wrong not to come from the mere dread of parting. A wise old lady of forty-seven ought to be more philosophical.

My book<sup>1</sup> has not got on much since I wrote last nor indeed have I done much, but I am in a ceaseless whirl and whizz from morning to night, now with the book, now with the drawings, now with articles for the *Times*, *Frazer*, here and there, and though its such a long time since I did write, indeed and indeed I have nothing to say, the days pass away to me like half hours, or rather like no time at all, clean forgotten as soon as spent; one being exactly like the other and passed in a kind of delirium.

I have just done a huge article on G. Cruikshank for the *L. and W.*<sup>2</sup> which I will send you when it appears. And furthermore am bringing out on my own account a weekly paper, the *Foolscap Library*.<sup>3</sup> I think it will take: and the profits of it are so enormous if successful that I don't like to share them with a bookseller: there is no reason why I should not make a big lump of money by it.

<sup>1</sup> *The Paris Sketch Book.*    <sup>2</sup> *London and Westminster Review.*

<sup>3</sup> On publication the name of *Foolscap Library* was changed to *The Whitey-Brown Paper Magazine*.

The new Boz<sup>1</sup> is dull but somehow gives one a very pleasant impression of the man: a noble tender-hearted creature, who sympathizes with all the human race. You will see in the Cruikshank article, some remarks against myself: I fail by sneering too much: but I think *Foolscap* will succeed, it begins with the adventures of Dionysius Diddler all in pictures like M. Vieuxbois, quite fabulous, but a good likeness of Lardner and Bulwer introduced.

John if you please have got a new coat and weskit, and is as deaf as a stone. I don't know that I shan't have to borrow from Father for *The Foolscap*:—the thing is a fortune but wants about £30 to start it: however I have some and shan't want yet. Why shouldn't I sell 5000, 10,000 copies?—they will pay me 40 or 80 a week: 80 a week is 4000 a year of which I would put by 3 at the very least per an: see Alnaschar in the *Arabian Nights*. And so God bless my dearest Mammy: and all at number 4: how bright it must look now. My dear old Paris!

W. M. T.

It was after an illness following upon the birth of a third daughter, Minny,<sup>2</sup> in May, 1840, that Isabella Thackeray's health failed. This made it necessary for Thackeray to break up his home and send his children to Paris to be with their grandparents. He himself remained with his wife. The devotion and tender love with which he nursed her, and the unflinching courage with which he faced misfortune, are revealed by his letters to Edward Fitzgerald and Mrs. Procter, the friends to whom he turned in his trouble.

My mother writes of this time, "One cure after another was prescribed, foreign baths and home treatment in turn, all of which my father saw carried out, but of course the expenses were very great. So was

<sup>1</sup> *Master Humphrey's Clock*, by Charles Dickens.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Leslie Stephen.

the anxiety and the difficulty of earning an income to meet it all."<sup>1</sup>

Long after, speaking of these days to his children, their father told them, how one day he was at his desk writing when the servant came and asked him for some money, and he changed the last five pounds he had to give.

Isabella Thackeray never sufficiently recovered from her illness to return to normal activities, and eventually it was found advisable for her health that she should lead a life away from home. Her husband until his death, and then his children saw and corresponded with her constantly up to the very end.

She lived with two devoted friends, first at Epsom and then at Leigh, Essex, where she died on the 11th of January, 1894, aged seventy-six.

In a letter written in 1852 to his friend W. F. Synge, Thackeray wrote: "Though my marriage was a wreck I would do it over again, for behold love is the crown and completion of all earthly good."

<sup>1</sup> Biographical Introduction to *Barry Lyndon*.

## II

1840—1846

In an introduction to *Barry Lyndon* my mother writes of the time which followed my grandmother's illness, and says:—"My baby sister and I were deposited with our great-grandmother, Mrs. Butler, who certainly thought us inconveniently young. But we had a friend; a faithful and loving-hearted Scotch nurse called Jessie Brodie, who rather than quit my father in his troubles at that time—broke off her own marriage, so she told me, shyly, long years after. She helped my father to nurse my mother at first, then he left her in charge of the nursery."

After staying with Mrs. Butler for some time the children went to Mrs. Carmichael-Smyth, with whom they spent the next six years. The Carmichael-Smyths lived in an apartment in the Rue d'Angoulême, a cheerful little street turning off the Champs Elysées.

During these years Thackeray's headquarters were in London, but he was constantly moving and travelling from place to place. Wherever he happened to be he never failed to write to his children.

*W. M. Thackeray to Anny aged 3<sup>1</sup>*

[1840.]

I have nothing to send my dearest Anny but a little picture:—The picture is of some little girls I saw going to church, and one of them I thought was like Anny.

Well, this is all I have to say for there is no time, because the person is waiting who is going to take

<sup>1</sup> This letter is written in big capitals.

this. God bless the little girl to whom he is going to take it, and her little sister. Do you know their names and that their papa loves them?

*W. M. Thackeray to Anny aged 4*

[1841.]

Though I have not written to my dearest Nanny, since I came away, I think about her many times; and pray God for her and Baby and to make them both well and good. You will be well I hope in the spring when we will take a house by the seaside, and you can go into the fields and pick flowers, as you used to do at Margate; before Mamma was ill and when Baby was only a little child in arms. Please God, Mamma will be made well one day too. How glad I shall be to see all my darlings well again: and there is somebody else who wants to see them again too and that is Brodie who longs to come back to them.

I have been to see your God-mamma who gave you the red shoes but she is very very ill.

The other night as I was coming home I met in the street two little girls, and what do you think they were doing? Although one was no bigger than you, and the other not so big as Baby, they were singing little songs in the street, in hopes that someone would give them money: they said their mother was at home—that is the elder one said so, (the younger one was so little that she could not speak plain, only sing) their mother was ill at home with three more children and they had no bread to eat!

So I thought of my two dear little girls, and how comfortable they were and how their Granny gave them good meals, and their Grand-mamma a nice house to live in; and I brought the little girls to Mr. Hill, the baker in Coram Street, and gave them a loaf and some money, and hope soon to give them some

more. And this is all I have to say except God bless my dearest Nanny and that I always say.

PAPA.

I am just come home and have your letter and thank my dear little girl for her good news.

*W. M. Thackeray to Anny aged 7*

27, Jermyn Street  
June 11, [1844].

MY DEAREST NANNY,—Thank you all for your little letters. I am always made glad by the sight of them; and by hearing from Granny that you are well and good. I shall come and see you very soon, and you must tell me in your next letter if you and Baby want anything that I can bring. Mamma I hope will soon come and live with me in England, at a very pretty village called Twickenham which is by the river Thames. There are beautiful walks there, meadows and trees and handsome houses in parks and gardens. How I should like to walk there with my dearest little girls. God bless them prays Papa.

*W. M. Thackeray to Anny aged 8*

December 30, [1845].

MY DEAREST NANNY,—Your letter has made me and Mamma very happy and very sad too, that we are away from our dearest little girls. But I for one shall see you before very long, I hope in a week from this day, and only write now to wish you a happy New Year. On Christmas day I dined with Mamma and she was very well and happy, only she grew very grave when she talked about you; and there were tears in her eyes the meaning of which I knew quite well.

How glad I am that it is a black puss and not a black nuss you have got! I thought you did not know how to spell it en-you-double-ess. But I see

the spelling gets better as the letters grow longer,  
they cannot be too long for me.

Laura must be a very good natured girl. I hope my dear Nanny is so too—not merely to her school-mistress and friends but to everybody:—to her servants and her nurses. I would sooner have you gentle and humble-minded than ever so clever. Who was born on Christmas day? Somebody who was so great that all the world worships Him; and so good that all the world loves Him; and so gentle and humble that He never spoke an unkind word. But I hope my Nanny is proud with no one. And there is a little sermon—and a great deal of love and affection from Papa. May God send my dearest children many happy New Years. I wonder who will kiss Minny for me?<sup>1</sup>

*W. M. Thackeray to Mrs. Carmichael-Smyth  
1st January [1846].*

MY DEAREST MAMMY,—I had intended to set off for a week's pleasuring with you to-day and have come in upon the New Year's day dinner: but I was a day behindhand in my work and as I see there is no chance of being with you, shall wait till Saturday and cross by a Brighton or Southampton boat. It is blowing a tempest here to-day too and I am not sorry for the three days' delay. My dearest Nanny's letter set me longing so to see you all that I must come, though it's not worth the while—though the pain of parting is much greater than the pleasure of meeting—at least to my ill-regulated mind.

Tell my dear little Nanny I have got some books for her and some pictures for Minny. My heart is with them all day and with my dearest old Mother.

In one of Anny's letters she wrote, we have got a black *Nuss* not *puss* I thought it was a natural

<sup>1</sup> This letter was printed by my mother in her Biographical Introduction to *Contributions to Punch*.

yellow-plushism—and was in truth very much disgusted at the idea of the nigger bonne. God bless all: and give you and me and dear old G. P. a happy New Year.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In another letter to his mother Thackeray writes: "I had a letter from Anny the other day. 'Papa' she says, 'I am very unhappy and don't know Y.' She is the true daughter of Mr. Yellow-plush isn't she?"



### III

1846—1852

IT was in the autumn of 1846 that my mother and her sister came back to live with their father. He had given up his rooms in St. James's Street and had taken 13, Young Street, Kensington Square, a pleasant old-fashioned, bow-windowed house.

"Once more after his first happy married years," my mother writes, "William Thackeray had a home and a family, if a house, two young children and a little black cat can be called a family."

In the following letter we find a description of the new house.

*W. M. Thackeray to Mrs. Carmichael-Smyth*

13, Young Street, Kensington July 1 [1846].

MY DEAREST MAMMY,—G. P.<sup>1</sup> writes me a word that you are unwell and that a change of air wd. do you good; what such a good change as to come here with the little ones? and I hope & pray in God that we shall be able to live together and that I may not be deprived of my Mother & my children. There are 2 capital bed-rooms & a little sitting room for you & G. P.—a famous bed-room for G. M. on the first floor —2 rooms for the children on second very airy and comfortable; a couple of rooms big enough for servants, & 2 little ones quite large enough for me—There's a good study down-stairs & a dining room & drawing room, and a little court yard & garden and a little green house; and Kensington Gardens at

<sup>1</sup> G. P. for grandpapa, the name by which Major Carmichael-Smyth was known in the family.

the gate, and omnibuses every 2 minutes. What can mortal want more? If I ask my friends I can ask them to my own quarters. We may all be independent and together. At all events I ask it as a favour that the experiment should be tried: and am sure that we shall all be the happier & better for it. I'm not ready for you yet: but hope in a fortnight's time to be prepared. I have been opening the trunks to-day full of the lumbering useless old books: and woeful relics of old days.

God bless my dearest little women. It will be a comfort to me to see them and I look to Kensington Gardens & to breakfasting together; and to many a happy day please God. Their Mother is so well and calm; that when they are of an age sufft. she will be quite able to come back to us—and I can't be sufficiently thankful for that famous old Mrs. Bakewell's admirable care of her. Gloyne too has been as good as can be.

I find the greatest comfort and enjoyment in the quiet of this place after the racket of St. James's street. I am going to quit the *Chronicle* very likely, but if I do it will be something better.

God bless my dearest Mother,  
W. M. T.

*W. M. Thackeray to his sister-in-law Jane Shawe*

[1846.]

What shall I tell you about my dear little girls? I see as little of them as you do almost. I have just taken a house big enough for the whole family; but I cannot get Major Smyth to come to England, and so I lose my Mother and my children too for some time at least. It would break her heart to part with them: and I can't bear that she should be alone and separated from us all. Here is the last report just come from Paris about Anny. "I assure you Nanny wants a

firmer hand than mine. She fights every inch of her way—if it's only to wash her face or put on her stockings she will not do it without an argument.—She is so clever: so selfish: so generous: so tender-hearted yet so careless of giving pain." I am afraid very much she is going to be a man of genius: I would far sooner have had her an amiable and affectionate woman. But little Minny will be that, please God,—and the sisters love each other admirably. As for me I am child-sick, and when I see in Kensington Gardens & in my friends' houses a pair of little girls at all resembling my own, become quite maudlin over them.

In my trade I am getting on very well: and doing everything but saving money. Goodbye my dear Jane, and remember I am always as in old times

Affectionately yours,  
W. M. THACKERAY.

### *Notes on Family History*<sup>1</sup>

We came to Young Street when I was nine and Minny was six. Papa was not at home when we arrived, but early next morning when we were half dressed and the maid was tying our strings, he tapped at the door and came and took us in his arms.

Everything seemed so strangely delightful. The volumes of *Punch* on the drawing-room table, the delightful keepsake books in their red covers, the old school-room with the bookcase and the cupboards, and Papa's room with the vine round about the windows and the sun pouring in.

Papa called Minny Min and me Nan very often, and when we were little, he used to call Minny Finniken and me Buff and sometimes Frederica and Louisa.

He called Pussy Louisa and gave her his fish at

<sup>1</sup> These *Notes on Family History* were written by my mother in 1894. I have drawn upon them to supplement the information contained in the letters.

breakfast, and took her up very gently and put her outside the door when she would not leave him alone.

When Papa was a tall young man with black hair and an eye glass, I can remember how we used to hold his fore finger when we walked out with him. He always talked to us very gravely as if we were grown women. Later on when we grew up he spoke to us, as if we were children and would say "Come along my little dears."

Papa used to talk to us a great deal, and tell us about the Bible and Religion. He would talk to us of a morning after breakfast in his study, and of an evening after dinner smoking his cigar, and we generally sat on the floor and listened to him. And then we would give him a chair for his legs and a little table for his candles and he would presently nod to us and go to sleep.

Papa could not bear the story of Abraham. He used to say that one day when I was a little girl he came in and found Mamma telling me in her sweet voice about Isaac, and that I burst into tears, and stamped and flew into a passion. I can remember it quite well too, and Papa taking me on his knee and Mamma looking a little shocked.

One night Papa told us he was lying in the dark with one hand outside the bed pointing up in the air. And he thought to himself "Now what would happen I wonder if the Devil were to come with a pair of nippers and take hold of my finger?" So then he put his hand under the bedclothes again, but he suddenly remembered that he was not safe, for the Devil might still come with a pair of nippers and take hold of his nose. We asked Papa if he put his nose under the bedclothes. He laughed and said: "No, not his nose."

When I was a little girl I was dreadfully frightened



ANNY AND HER FATHER  
From a drawing by W. M. T.



by a story he told me, of a man whose nose had been broken for years, and one day when he was blowing it, it came off in his hand,—then Papa waved his hand. I felt a little thrill of horror and thought Papa's was coming off.

*W. M. Thackeray to Mrs. Carmichael-Smyth*

Friday, Decr. 4 [1846].

MY DEAREST MAMMY,—Now the children are with me I am getting so fond of them that I can understand the pang of the dear old Mother who loses them : and who by instinct is 100 times fonder of them than ever a man could be. But it is best that they should be away from you :—at least that they should be away either from you or me. There can't be two first principles in a house. We should secretly be jealous of one another : or I should resign the parental place altogether to you, and be a bachelor still. Whereas now God Almighty grant I may be a father to my children. Continued thoughts of them, chase I don't know how many wickednesses out of my mind : their society makes many of my old amusements seem trivial and shameful. What bounties are there of Providence in the very instincts wh. God gives us. To talk about such things though is wrong I think and engenders pride. Best think about them and be humble.

Only I write so far to give my dearest old Mother a consolation in her bereavement. Remember the children are in their natural place : with their nearest friend working their natural influence : getting and giving the good, let us hope, wh. the Divine Benevolence appointed to result from the union between parents & children. May I hold fast by it I pray to God our Father.

And how thankful this makes me to you & my dear old G. P. who have kept the children for me, and

watched them so nobly and tenderly—kind and affectionate hearts—dear & affectionate friends, for this I thank and bless you as the father of my children.

Goodbye dearest old Mother—Venable is coming to dine on Tuesday—my old schoolfellow, who spoiled my profile.<sup>1</sup> Should you like to come?

W. M. T.

*Major Carmichael-Smyth to Mrs. Carmichael-Smyth  
(who was staying at 13, Young Street)*

Paris  
April [1847].

Annie is now of an age, when she can receive a great deal of useful information with much advantage, and she has a mind thirsting for knowledge. William should have a very respectable female to look after the children when he cannot be with them, and he should also devote as much time as he can spare to their instruction.

I had just written so far when I received a letter from Mrs. Collemache and she tells me Bess<sup>2</sup> is preparing to go to England, and will probably be with you before the end of this month. So we may consider this matter as settled for the present.

Give the children many kisses from their old Grandpapa who will often regret the loss of their merry faces. God bless you dearest, and with kind love to William.

I am ever your most affectionate

HENRY CARMICHAEL-SMYTH.

<sup>1</sup> *Notes and Queries*, August 5, 1911, contains an account of the fight at Charterhouse in which W. M. T.'s nose was broken. Mr. Roupell who had been his fag-master writes: "It was a wet half-holiday when a boy named Gossip asked leave for Thackeray and Venables to fight. We wanted some amusement so I let them fight it out in Penny's room, with the important result to Thackeray's nasal organ. Thackeray bled so profusely as to stop the fight but he and Venables remained friends for life."

<sup>2</sup> A protégée of Mrs. Carmichael-Smyth's, who was engaged as governess to the children.

*W. M. Thackeray to Mrs. Carmichael-Smyth*

The Reform Club [1847].

MY DEAREST MAMMY,—A line just to wish you—though I know it's a humbug—a merry Xmas. Next year please God you shall have such a one really, and your old eyes will be gladdened by the sight of the children. They are meanwhile doing the greatest good to their father. That must be the poor dear old Mother's only consolation.

My prospects are very much improved and *Vanity Fair* may make me. The thought thereof makes me very humble and frightened—not elated.

Bess is great in the household affairs and the best & briskest of all managers. She manages the children admirably: she gives me too good dinners, that is her only fault.

*Mrs. Perkins* is a great success—the greatest I have had—very nearly as great as Dickens, that is Perkins 500 Dickens 25000 only that difference! but we are selling out our edition very fast, near 1500 are gone out of 2000 already—and this is a great success for the likes of me.

God bless you my dearest old Mother & G. P. When you get this Anny and her old dunce of a father will be at church praying heartily for us all.

W. M. T.

To Mr. Alan Cole I am indebted for the following letter from my mother, written at the age of eleven. Echoes of the revolutions of 1848 had evidently reached the Young Street nursery, and a society is formed by Anny and her playfellows with no less an object than the "stoppation of starvation" all the world over.

*Anny Thackeray to her friend Letitia Cole  
aged ten.*

MADAM,—After having duly considered the subject to-day proposed by you to me, I feel it my duty

to bring before the Honble. board of Juveniles, a few of the pro's and cons, towards my accepting of that important office of secretary. 1st. Mrs. Carmichael-Smyth, having been informed of the favor to-day conferred upon me, started an objection, which though *I* am perfectly sure of its voidness, yet I cannot in any sincerity refrain from mentioning it, namely that she was not quite sure whether my honoured father would entirely approve of my writting begging letters to my friends, and though I (vainly) represented to her that it was not I who wrote, but the Society, she replied that she thought I had better write and ask my father whom I suppose you are aware is at present at Paris.

Of course I shall be most happy to accept the secretaryship (if I can get it) but as to asking for subscriptions I would feel most deeply grateful to the board if they would allow me the time for an answer from my Papa.

If I was you I'd post a prospectus to the Prince of Wales, he might send us 50£ and as his father is the patron of the great one, why should he not be the patron of the little one?

In the prospectus of our Society I would propose something of this kind—The uses of this Commity are many. They firstly not only further the commerce of England herself but of the world's children, think of this and be proud and happy to send in your little subscription, and by stoppation of starvation—save millions of people from death, deliver countries from bloody wars excited by starving populace etc.

My grandmother says I must not write any longer so, Madam

Your obdt, Servant,  
A. THANAKINS TITMARSH.

*W. M. Thackeray to his sister-in-law Jane Shawe*

Kensington  
19 September [1848].

I write a line just to shake you by the hand and wish you a happy voyage to your brother. I ought to write and thank him too, for he wrote me the kindest letter about his nieces, and you will be able to give him a good report of them thank God. If ever I make a decent drawing of the little woman he shall have it; but I hope he will judge for himself in England before long, and to see him here, where those who have been good to my wife and children are always welcome.

Won't you write to us and tell us that you are well and happy? I hope you will do so, dear Jane, and after the grief of parting with your Mother for a little, enjoy a grand voyage and a sight of new countries and people. I wish I had the journey before me, and could see the place where I was born again.<sup>1</sup>

It is about this time eight years that the *Jupiter* came into Cork with our poor little woman on board. My dear, I can't forget how tenderly you always loved her: and look over often in my mind that gap of time since she has been dead to us all and see that dear artless sweet creature who charmed us both so. What a whirl of life I've seen since then! but never her better I think. "N'est-ce pas mourir tous les jours"—don't you recollect her singing and her sweet sweet voice? Her anxious little soul would have been alarmed at my prosperities such as they are. She was always afraid of people flattering me: and I get a deal of that sort of meat nowadays.

Here comes Anny with a pair of letters of which Minny's is the best: and Anny's by no means overburthened with affection, but sincerity is the next best thing. The child has a very warm heart and

<sup>1</sup> Calcutta.

wd. love you if she knew you. She says at the end of her letter, "Give my love to Uncle Charles"—and I say so too. Give my love to him with all my heart. I wish him and you a good voyage. We have had a difference, I know how it began—but I hardly know what it is—and I remember that he and Mary were once very kindly and warmly disposed towards me, and helped me and mine at the time of our greatest need. So give him my love and Farewell dear Jane.

*W. M. Thackeray to his brother-in-law Arthur  
Shawe*

13, Young Street, Kensington  
May 27 [1849].

This is your niece Harriet's (or Minny as we call her) birthday—and as she was seated at the window yonder just now I made a drawing of her, and bethought me that you and Jane, would be glad to hear about the children. Minny is 9. Anny will be 12 on the 9 June—and is a great sensible clever girl, with a very homely face, and a very good heart and a very good head, and an uncommonly good opinion of herself, as such clever people will sometimes have. Minny is very well for cleverness too as children go: and both have a great deal of spoiling and fondness from my Mother, who supplies to them the place of their own—now nearly nine years removed from them. She is at Epsom very well. So you see there are pretty good accounts of all this family, including your brother-in-law the writer of the present: who is become quite a lion within the last 2 years, and is rather prosperous as times go. But though I am at the top of the tree in my business and making a good income now, near upon £2000 a year let us say—yet it is only within the last few months that I have got to this point: and was abominably hit by an unfortunate railway speculation of which I have still not discharged the obligation—so that I am in debt.

*W. M. Thackeray to his daughter Anny*

*June [1850].*

MY DEAREST NAN,—I am so busy with my work<sup>1</sup> and so tired of writing that I can only write you a line or two. I'm delighted that you are so happy and that you enjoy yourself & that your friends are so kind to you. The way to have friends is to like people yourself, you see; and I hope you will have and keep a plenty.

I have been at home 3 whole days think of that, not going out, at least not until near 8 o'clock to dinner: so that my work is pretty well advanced and will be done by Sunday evg. I trust. Then comes printing and proof correcting & so forth, and by Thursday I hope to see you young folk again and bring you back. I must dine with the Chief Baron on the 31st May. Or can Mrs. Fanshawe afford to keep you till Saturday? when I would come down and would take a small trip to the Isle of Wight or somewhere? Please Mrs. Fanshawe write me a word on this subject.

Miss Trulock<sup>2</sup> has had a good offer of £100 a year and I'm afraid must leave us—there will be the business to do over again, the same perplexities, botherations uncertainties, why don't you get a little older and do without a governess? You will some day when you'll spell excursion with an S not a T.

Don't make doggrel verses and spell badly for fun. There should be a lurking prettiness in all buffoonery even, and it requires an art wh. you don't know yet to make *good* bad verses—to make bad ones is dull work.

And don't scribble faces at the bottom of your letters to ladies—they shouldn't be done unless they are clever—they are not respectable or ladylike, do

<sup>1</sup> *Pendennis.*

<sup>2</sup> The children's governess, successor to "Bess."

you understand? I like you to make jokes to me because I can afford to tell you whether they are bad or good, or to scold you as now: but Mrs. Brookfield is too kind to do so: and when you write to her or to any other lady, you should write your very best. I don't mean, be affected and use fine words, but be careful, grateful and ladylike.

I did not dine till 9 o'clock last night and went to the Opera afterwards, but the ballet bored me and I came away pretty soon. I think that's all I know. And so God bless you and my dearest Minikin: and our friends who receive you so affectionately, & farewell.

W. M. T.

The following note was added to this letter by my mother in 1898.

"I never write an untidy letter but I think of this one. Alas! it has not yet made me into a tidy woman." A. I. R.

*W. M. Thackeray to his Daughters*

[1850.]

MY DEAREST ANNYMINNY,—As I have not written a single word this day, I think I may have a five minutes' talk to your ladyships. You went to St. Mary's church<sup>1</sup> I suppose. I recollect it in the year 1817, when I was a miserable little beggar, at school at the Polygon, under an olivey little blackguard who used to starve and cane us. Times are changed since then and you young women have not had much starving or scolding in the course of your easy lives.

Whilst you have been at church, I have at least been doing no manner of work: for I have been at Richmond all day, dawdling in the sun under a tree, or making sketches for the Miss Berrys<sup>2</sup> with my "goold" pen. The ease and tranquillity were very refreshing, after the hard work of the past 4 or 5 days.

<sup>1</sup> Southampton.

<sup>2</sup> Horace Walpole's friends.

I looked about to see if there were tempting-looking lodgings anywhere about. But the prices are very heavy for good rooms, and if Miss Trulock is going away, what the deuce are we to do?—A plague upon such misadventures. As I think over matters just now, I shan't be able to go to the I of Wight with you, and I don't see why you shouldn't travel back as safely as you went. So you must please to write and say by what train you'll come away on Thursday, and the carriage and your Papa or else James<sup>1</sup> his Viceregent upon earth, shall be at Waterloo Station to meet you.

I am going out of town to-morrow evening to stay over Wednesday, & to return on Thursday—Shall I get a new Governess or shall I send you to School after the midsummer holydays? I do believe the latter would be the best plan—and then you'd learn something, as it is—ballottées from one Governess to another, now at London and next at Aix-la-Chapelle, your young days pass away without any larning—and in fine I'm in a great puzzle concerning you.

This is all I have to say I think. It ain't very amusing or very wise is it? Give my love to your Mrs. Fanshawe and a kiss to Totty: and remember young ladies that I'm always your affectionate father

W. M. T.

*W. M. Thackeray to his cousin Mrs. Irvine*

[1850].

Hélas, madame et cousine je suis engagé à dîner à Newgate avec les chérifs de Londres—nous irons voir les prisonniers les treadmills et les jolis petits condamnés qu'on va pendre.

Après je vais dans plusieurs soirées élégantes (Surtout chez cette dame, Miladi Gordon que votre mari aime tant) Aussi je ne serai de retour à Kensington qu'à minuit, bien trop tard pour venir frapper à votre

<sup>1</sup> Thackeray's servant.

Helen, madame et cousine. Je suis engagé  
à dîner à Newgate demain avec les Chiens  
de Londres - vous vous voit les prisonniers  
les treadmills et les fols petits condamnés  
qu'on va pendre



Après je vais dans plusieurs soirées élégantes



(J'irai chez cette dame, Mme Gordon que votre  
mari aime tant) alors je me serai de retour

à Kensington qui a fini tout, bien trop tard  
pour venir frapper à votre porte forte si long  
telle de votre Collage si calme avec tout ce

grand et petit monde



Sur couché

mes demoiselles sont gâtées maintenant  
de leur chicken-pot - Elles envoient mille  
salutations d'amitié à la colonie de



Litt' Holland Ouse

Adieu Madame et chère Cousine  
Votre affectionnée  
Chevalier de Titterworth

petite porte si tranquille de votre Cottage si calme où tout ce grand et petit monde sera couché.

Mes demoiselles sont guéries maintenant le leur chicken pock. Elles envoient mille salutations d'amitié à la colonie de Littl' Olland Ouse.

Adieu Madame et chère cousine,  
Votre affectionné,  
CHEVALIER DE TITMARSH.

*W. M. Thackeray to his Daughters*

Hotel de Suède, Brussels  
Sunday, 15 Sept. [1850].

MY DEAREST YOUNG WOMEN—I am so far on my way home and my journey has been but a dull one: only to Homburg and back again where we stopped for 5 days pretty pleasantly doing nothing, reading novels, making sketches, seeing the people drink the waters and gamble at the tables. I tried my luck once or twice and think I won about 5 shillings altogether: but I'm glad I came as it has given me what I wanted for my Xmas book.<sup>1</sup> What I should have liked best wd. have been the society of Miss Anny & Miss Minny—no of Minny some 2 years later.

In 1852, when I'm back from America and you are grown even bigger stronger & fatter than at present, please God, we'll make a tour together, and admire the beautiful works of Nature together. You may be very thankful both of you for possessing that faculty, the world is not  $\frac{1}{2}$  a world without it, and the more you indulge this pleasure the better you are. O, I saw such grand phenomena of sunrise at Cologne the other morning as I looked out of my window upon the river! It's useless to try and describe the scene in writing, but those magnificent spectacles of Nature are like personal kindnesses from the Maker to us—and make one feel grateful.

<sup>1</sup> *The Kickleburys on the Rhine.*

I wandered about the town yesterday wh. is smaller but handsomer and richer than Paris, looking for something to buy for you young ladies: but I could hit on nothing that I thought wd. be useful or that you would like very much, and I daresay I shall come back empty handed.

On Thursday or Friday you may look out for me I think—I shall try for the next 2 or 3 days to be quiet here (my companion leaving me to-day) and to come back with some of my month's work done.—That's why I'm writing very early in the morning, that I may breakfast quietly, and have a quiet days work afterwards. Meanwhile you two young ladies will go down on your knees at Church, & say your prayers for me—Won't you? and so good bye and God bless all.

W. M. T.

If you get this on Monday I should like an answer —It will be here on Tuesday afternoon: and I shan't go till Wednesday evg. or Thursday.

#### *Notes on Family History*

On Sunday mornings in Young Street we had no lessons and we used to sit with my father in his study and help him with his wood blocks, also it was often our business to rub out the failures and to wash the chalk off the blocks.

I can still remember a dreadful day when I washed away a finished drawing for which the messenger from *Punch* was at that moment waiting in the hall.

Upstairs in the schoolroom at the top of the house we used to do our lessons of a week day, and sometimes to our joy we would be called downstairs by my father, and he would pose us as models for his drawings to *Punch* or *Vanity Fair*.

Then when I was fourteen my father first began to make use of me as his secretary and to dictate his

books to me. That was in 1851, the year of the great Exhibition, and one wonderful and never-to-be-forgotten night my father took us to see some great ladies in their dresses going to the Queen's fancy-dress ball at Buckingham Palace. We drove to some big house (it was all very vague and dazzlingly indistinct in my mind). We were shown into a great empty room and almost immediately some doors were flung open, there came a blaze of light, a burst of laughing voices, and from a many-twinkling dinner-table rose a company that seemed, to our unaccustomed eyes, as if all the pictures in Hampton Court had come to life. The chairs scraped back, the ladies and gentlemen advanced together over the shining floors.

I can remember their high heels clicking on the floor; they were in the dress of the court of King Charles II, the ladies beautiful, dignified and excited. There was one, lovely and animated in yellow; I remember her pearls shining. Another seemed to us even more beautiful, as she crossed the room, all dressed in black, but she, I think, was not going to the ball; and then somebody began to say Sir Edwin Landseer had promised to rouge them and then everybody to call out for him, and then there was an outcry about his moustaches that "really must be shaved off" for they were not in keeping with his dress.

Then, as in a dream, we went off to some other great house, Bath House perhaps, where one lady, more magnificently dressed than all the others, was sitting in a wax-lighted dressing-room and just behind her chair stood a smiling gentleman, also in court dress, whom my father knew, and he held up something in one hand and laughed, and said he must go back to the house from whence he had come and the lady thanked him and called him Sir Edwin. We could not understand who this Sir Edwin was, who seemed to be wherever we went, nor why he should put on the rouge. Then a fairy thundering chariot

carried off this splendid lady and the nosegays of the hanging footmen seemed to scent the air as the equipage drove off, under the covered way. Perhaps all this is only a dream, but I think it is true: for there was again a third house where we found more pictures, two beautiful alive young pictures and their mother, for whom a parcel was brought in post-haste, containing a jewel all dropping with pearls. That evening was always the nearest approach to a live fairy tale that we ever lived; and that ball more brilliant than any we ever beheld.<sup>1</sup>

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*W. M. Thackeray to Mrs. Carmichael-Smyth*

March 15 [1852].

MY DEAREST MAMMY,—I was going to write on this very little sheet of paper when your letter came in. M. de Wailly is the very man of all France I would like to translate<sup>2</sup> me, but is it possible he can give as much as 4,000 francs to me?—there must be some mistake I fear. Nevertheless I empower you to act, and get what you can for me.

I have given up and only had for a day or two the notion of the book<sup>3</sup> in numbers. It's much too grave and sad for that, and the incident not sufficient. You will dislike it very much. It was written at a period of grief and pain so severe that I don't like to think of it, and am ashamed now to be well so soon and rid of my melancholy.

The house in the Square has been long since given up. It is delightfully comfortable but would cost 500£ and I should be no better off. About Sloane St. must be my mark when I move

I went and sate with poor old Miss Berry last night, and amused her with a comic story which I was quite astonished as I told myself as I dont generally perform the wag or talk much.

<sup>1</sup> This description was used by my mother in an article on Sir Edwin Landseer.

<sup>2</sup> The translation of *Esmond* into French.

<sup>3</sup> *Esmond*.

Eyre Crowe is not Elliot's secretary, but mine for the nonce, and Professor of drawing to the young ladies. I can quite utilize him and like dictating to him: and Miss Holmes<sup>1</sup> has arrived and been here 3 days. There's something very natural and good in her. She seems to me to play very soberly and finely; she says Minny takes to learning the theory of music surprizingly, and that they both may play very well, and have been taught very well by Miss



Trulock, too, who is mortified at the new professor, but bears her mortification very kindly. She's a good woman. Poor Miss Holmes is not a lovely object to look upon with red hair and nose, the lady of Babylon is scarcely more scarlet. I have told her she must come and give her lesson and be off without much talking, else she will be theologizing, but I shall be glad if the gals can be taught music by an *artist* who has the brains and heart as well as

<sup>1</sup> Music mistress.

the fingers of her art. And so my little page is full and I am my dearest old Mother's & G. P.'s affte W. M. T.

When Wm. Grey goes to Paris you'll have the use of the bag again.

*W. M. Thackeray to his daughter Minny*

Brighting. [1852].

MY DEAREST MINNICKIN,—Kensington is so gloomy without certain young ladies that I can't stand it. How dismal it must be for poor Eliza who has no friends to go to: who must stop in the kitchen all day—as I think of her I feel a mind to go back and sit in the kitchen with Eliza! but I daresay I shouldn't amuse her much, and after she had told me about the cat and how her father was, we should have nothing more to say to one another.

Last week I was away at Manchester and I thought what a state my dear little women would have been in, when I broke down in a speech before 3000 ladies and gentlemen.—I felt very foolish, but I tried again at night and did better; and as there's nothing more wicked in breaking down in a speech than in slipping on a piece of orange peel and breaking one's nose, why I got up again—and made another speech at night without breaking down. It's all custom and most people can no more do it than they can play the piano without learning—I hope you and Anny are learning hard to play me to sleep when I come back from America.

I believe I am going to Birmingham next week with the lectures and then to Manchester & Liverpool and then Steward: bring a basin. Well that will be over soon and my dearest children back to me please God. Meanwhile young women you are in luck to have 2 homes and to be happy in one while t'other is being painted and made more comfortable—for I shall be immensely more comfortable when I

have some money to leave you; and so will you too some day when you get it. I wish you may. Have you read—never mind: I won't go on with that sentence.

This place always makes me better you know and I'm quite a different man to the individdiwidyouall who came down on Monday—and yesterday what do you think I goes to see?—another marriage William Hankey Esqre. to Cecile Charlotte d'Estamper daughter of etc.—Fanny was there looking very pretty and happy and she sent her love to you, and talked of both of you very kindly indeed—and seemed to be as pleased with her father's marriage as he was almost. Well I think I shall marry Tishy Cole if she will have me and say: "Tishia my daughters are so anxious for me not to be alone no more, that just to please them I appoint you Mrs. T."—then we will have the fly (the large one not the brougham) from Ottways, and we will drive to the Starringarter at Richmond and Tishy shall take the head and you shall sit right and left of the table and we will have whitebait and fiddledididdlydiddleydie—there's enough of that.

Mrs. Yorke was so kind at Birmingham: almost everybody is: so was the Mayor of Manchester with whom I went to stay. It seems about a year ago: but it was only this day week: I spose the time that passes idly passes slowly, and I have not been able to settle anything since I came back and I can't go out of the reach of London till my novel<sup>1</sup> is through the press. I like it better in print than in writing and hope the public will like it too.

I think the Fanshawes are very likely coming to Kensington in my absence. Mr. F. is ill again, and London air does good to his *hashma*. I had written a long letter to Anny but it is in my pocket and I don't think I shall send it. And O I forgot! there's one from the Thackerays on my table at home—And

<sup>1</sup> *Esmond*.

Major Bob is here and what do you think? He has written a pamphlet and sent it to the president who has acknowledged it very kindly, there's news! And so God bless and keep you my darlings & God bless Granny & G. P. says you don't know who. I shall be back home an Monday.

*W. M. Thackeray to Anny*

[1852.]

My DEAREST A.—At last I get your 6 lines. I was coming to Zurich after Berlin and had hoped to have a week's quiet there with you all—but now, who nose where I'll go? Write to me at Berlin P. Restante. Have you got my letters, Granny her's, G. P. his from Lubbock's? Answer these queries please.

I haven't had any news of my poor pocket-book:<sup>1</sup> nor have I been able to write a word and scarce to stir in this heat, but I shall travel at night and sleep through it and not stop at the buggy Prague but go straight to Dresden and see if I can paint a bit. Here it has been like a little London with fine dinners every day only they are over at 7 and I go to the play or the opera. Nothing can be hospitable than Ld. Westmoreland.

I am glad I have seen the places. Tyrol and Salzkammergut, Munich and the Franconian towns, but there's no book to be made about 'em: and we 3 couldn't have made the journey comfortably: you 2 are too big to sit 3 on a side—Ah me, I wish I was back from America! My darling women must work hard in my absence and be able to play polkas and waltzes to set me asleep doucement after dinner. Its too hot to move here almost; I read all day, and can't bring myself to write.

Last night I was at another open-air play quite as good as the first I wrote you about—and I saw the Authoress who admires my works. Mon Dieu

<sup>1</sup> Stolen.

qu'elle était laide ! but her husband adores her luckily, and what matters, so long as he is appy ? It seems about a year since I have been on my travels. I suppose it was wholesomest for me not to work : and I must soon get back to it and see whats to be done and fill up the hole made by the loss of the £90 in the pocket-book. A week's work will do that easily.

God bless my dearest Min and my little Nan and my dearest old Mammy and G. P. This is only to tell you where a letter will find me.

W. M. T.

Wednesday, *July 14.*

## IV

1852—1854

In October, 1852, Thackeray went to America to lecture on "*The English Humourists of the Eighteenth Century*." He was away six months, during which time his daughters stayed at Paris with their grandparents.

*Anny Thackeray aged fifteen to W. M. Thackeray  
in America*

Paris [November, 1852].

As usual, I have nothing to tell to my dearest of Father's except that on Wednesday (to-morrow) his Imperial Highness<sup>1</sup> will arrive from St. Cloud and be received at the Tuileries by the Senators, who will acknowledge him their Emperor, and the Tuileries are all gilt and furbished up for him. Mrs. Corkran says it will be called "République Française No. 3 Emp." and Pauline says she read in an old book his name isn't Louis Napoleon but Louis Charles! Grannie had rather relented after Abd-el-Kader, but now he has spoilt all by reducing the Protestant Conclave to half its number, and by the Bishop of St. Denis.

To-day we have been to M. Monod's Cours and presented our "analyses" tied with red ribbon, but next week we shall get purple for the Empire.

There are about 20 girls and 20 mothers all round the room. There is Blanche Girot, the beauty, beautifully dressed, and Miss Stumff, the stupid one—isn't it a good name?—and Zélie de Marville (Oh! if I had

<sup>1</sup> Napoleon III.

been called Zélie de Marville) and Marie Petit, the tall one, and Lucie de Latouche, and a great many more.

We were half as happy at your letter, as when you came back, dear Papa. It came just as I was reading out the most dreary passages of *Iphigénie*, and the maid came in with "Connaissez vous cette écriture-là, Mademoiselle?" Mrs. Colmache sent us the *Globe* with some verses of yours which Grannie said were like Lord Byron and which I thought were like you, as melancholy as Agamemnon in *Iphigénie*, and Grannie and I both burst out laughing at seeing ourselves both crying a little. I wonder what makes people cry when they are unhappy, and when they are happy too, and when they are neither the one nor the other?

To-day is the first cold day; it was so delightful out, with a nice brisk fog, and the little school-boys running to school and Laure and I could hardly help dancing, and we bought some chestnuts which made us perfectly happy. The dandies have got most elegant cloaks over one shoulder, all braided and arranged with hoods and tassels and I don't know what, and we meet splendid ladies in velvets driving, negros giving placards, and such quantities of dirty Priests. Yesterday we had a race with the little Corkrans in the Tuileries. "I will fall down and break my nose," said little Mary so prettily, and fancy Minnie bursting out into German with their maid. Now it is eight-thirty and I must go and drink my tea and go to bed presently. Good-night, my dearest Papa.

A. THACKERAY.

*Anny Thackeray to W. M. Thackeray in America*

Paris  
[1852].

MY DEAREST FATHER,—To-day at church we had to pray for His Majesty the Emperor and all the Royal Family, and on Thursday we had a holiday to go

and look at His Majesty riding into Paris. Minnie prepared a purple cockade, which she put upon G. P. and you may guess how disgusted Grannie was. There were soldiers all down the Champs Elysées and splendid aides-de-camps with feathers galloping about. Generals with their staffs trotting off to St. Cloud, regiments dashing by, all in the drizzling rain, and opposite a whole regiment of Dragoons, there was sitting, one of Mrs. Doyle's little dogs looking up at them, and nothing would induce it to move. After waiting about four hours (we were in an entresol) there came more regiments and elegant aides-de-camps, and I determined that that is what I should like to have been born. And Jerome on horseback very unsteady and fat, and then all alone in front of a Regiment his Royal Highness, who was too far off for me to see plainly, on a prancing horse with a red velvet saddle and golden bridles, and I forget what coat Louis Napoleon wore, but he had a fine red ribbon across his body. They cried "Vive l'Empereur" a little, not very much. Grannie says she counted twelve, but I assure you there were more. The only way the Champs Elysées were adorned was a piece of calico stretched across the Rond Point, which was not half long enough to reach from one side to the other.

I think I am a Napoleonist, for he has done so many good-natured things; all the poor who have pawned their mattresses and any other things within four days may take them back for nothing, and all debtors under I don't know what, are let out of prison,—the warnings to the newspapers are taken away, and little crimes are forgiven, and the soldiers got an extra day's pay. Yesterday we saw him, but as I couldn't see his face I didn't know who it was, till a little man rushed up to Grannie and said "C'est l'Empereur!" "Phuiff!" says Grannie, and walks on. Minnie was with the Corkrans at the Bois de Boulogne

and told me that Sutton set up a loud cheer and got a bow.

I am afraid Grannie is still miserable about me, but it bothers me when the clergymen say that everybody ought to think alike and follow the one true way, forgetting that it is they who want people to think alike, that is, as they do. Monsieur Monod tells us things about the Garden of Eden, which he proves by St. Paul's epistles. I don't understand how God can repent and destroy His own work, or how He can make coats as He did for Adam, or shut a door, as they say He shut Noah in, and it is things like these that they think one must go to hell for not respecting and believing. I am sure when Christ talks about "My words" He means His own, not the Bible, as Grannie says, but I don't know what it means when He says that He did not come to destroy the law but to fulfil it, and so I suppose everybody is right and nobody knows anything. Minnie and I can love you and Grannie with all our heart and that is our business. Good-bye, my dear Papa, I daresay you are thinking of us now and we send our love to you over the sea.

ANNIE THACKERAY.

*Anny Thackeray to George M. Smith*

19, Rue d'Angoulême, Paris  
[1852].

MY DEAR SIR,—I write to tell you how much obliged we are to you for your kind offer. It would give us all the greatest pleasure to have my father's picture,<sup>1</sup> and we thank you very much for proposing to send it. I think (if it is the same to you) that we should like best to have it here, so as to be able to look at it instead of him.

<sup>1</sup> Before Thackeray started for America, George Smith, the publisher of *Esmond*, commissioned Samuel Laurence to draw his portrait. Two copies were made, one George Smith gave to Charlotte Bronte, the other to Thackeray's children.



ANNY AND MINNY

From a water-colour sketch by W. M. T.



He writes very often to us and says he gets on famously.

Believe me,  
Very faithfully yours,  
A. THACKERAY.

*W. M. Thackeray to A. Fonblanque*

Richmond, Virginia  
*March 4<sup>th</sup> [1853].*

MY DEAR FONBLANQUE,—I hope you have kept carefully all those "Letters of a traveller in America" which will form the basis of my future work in 6 volumes—the drawings are not the least valuable part don't you think so? *entre nous* young Crowe touched them up and—enough of this small joking which may reach you about the First of April and which please put down to the compliments of that waggish season. I've not written a word that's the truth. I've seen and remarked nothing: in the great cities I had hardly leisure to write to my family, and those one or two kind female correspondentes to whom a man writes, not about the country he is travelling in, but about himself—and all I have to say about this great country, that's worth saying might be put down on the remainder of this side of paper.

What could Dickens mean by writing that book of *American Notes*? No man should write about the country under 5 years of experience, and as many of previous reading. A visit to the Tombs, to Laura Bridgman and the Blind Asylum, a description of Broadway—O Lord is that describing America? It's a mole or a pimple on the great Republican body, or a hair of his awful beard and no more. I have hardly seen as much as that; and gave up sight-seeing at once as impossible to a man in my position here. Your room is besieged all day by visitors, you go about from dinner to tea-party and ball, and the

people don't talk to you but try and make you talk. "Well Sir, how do you like our country, Sir?" that's the formula, and as you are answering this query, the host comes up and says "Allow me Sir to introduce you to Mr. Jones of Alabama, Sir"—shake hands with Jones of Alabama, query as before; it is not answered when you are presented to Mr. Smith of Tennessee. "We know you very well, Sir," says S. of T. "your works are extensively read among us, allow me to present you to my Lady, Sir, who is a great admirer of" etc.—Mrs. Smith of Tennessee then commences "How do you like our etc. Sir"—and, by Heaven, evening after evening passes off in this way. I know 100 people more every day, and walk the street in terror lest every man and lady I meet should be my acquaintance of the night before. It makes one half crazy the constant representation—and what must it have been in Dickens's time when deputations met him daily and his life was watched by myriads of admirers? I have refused to be a personage with all my might, nor indeed has there been much of that sort of honour thrust upon me; and though I have had plenty of praise from the newspapers; I have had plenty of assaults too which were quite refreshing. Ah Monsieur! if one might but hit again, here and on t'other side of the water, how invigorating and pleasant it would be! There are 2 dear friends I know of in my beloved country! —O for the day when Makepeace might just cease to be Makepeace and "go in"!

A great good wh. an Englishman who has seen men and cities gets by coming hither, is that he rubs a deal of Cockney arrogance off, and finds men and women above all as good as our own. You learn to sympathise with a great hearty nation of 26 millions of English-speakers, not quite ourselves but so like the difference is not worth our scorn certainly; nay I'm not sure I don't think the people are our superiors.

There's a rush and activity of life quite astounding, a splendid recklessness about money wh. has in it something admirable too. Damn the money says every man. He's as good as the richest for that day. If he wants champagne he has champagne, Mr. Astor can't do more. You get an equality wh. may shock ever so little at first, but has something hearty and generous in it. I like the citizenship and general freedom. And in the struggles wh. every man with whom you talk is pretty sure to have had, the ups and downs of his life, the trades or professions he has been in—he gets a rough and tumble education wh. gives a certain piquancy to his talk and company. There's beautiful affection in this country, immense tenderness, romantic personal enthusiasm, and a general kindness and serviceableness and good nature, wh. is very pleasant and curious to witness for us folks at home who are mostly ashamed of our best emotions, and turn on our heel with a laugh sometimes when we are most pleased and touched. If a man falls into a difficulty a score of men are ready to help. The Editor of a newspaper in this little city with 12,000 whites and as many negroes was shot in a duel—the city subscribed £200 a year for his orphans. Meagher told me yesterday (a fine fellow Meagher, manly, modest, brave, funny, handsome, immensely in earnest and at war with the priests) that there came a girl to Washington from New York bound to Louisiana. She asked leave to sleep on board the boat at Washington the Captain took her to his own house, gave her in charge to the Conductor of the Railway at Acquia Creek, who saw her through the journey to Richmond, and ran off instantly thence to get her a carriage and see her luggage packed and herself forwarded to the Southern Station. And the Queen being abused by an Englishman at New York, who should be her champion but this Meagher the rebel—(this is par parenthèse)

Three as fine Irishmen as ever I met, were he and Dillon and O'Gorman, refugees and flourishing lawyers at New York now. I tell you it's grand country entirely. The young blood beating in its pulses warms one, like the company of young men in England. I don't know what I wouldn't do if I were 10 years younger—if I were 10 years younger I might sneer to be sure and satirise Jordan because it wasn't like Abanah and Pharpar rivers of Damascus. As a refuge for men who can't make their way at home, it's a great place. What a country where a labouring man begins with earning a dollar a day. An Irishman dictating a letter home to his friends in Ireland out of Maryland, bade his Master write "My dear Phil, Me Masther is the best of Masthers, and I ayt mayt three toimes a week"—"Three times a week" says the Master—"you eat it three times a day you rogue and 6 times if you like!" "Hush Master!" says Paddy—"Sure they wouldn't believe me if I said more than 3 times a week!" Think of country laborers in England and 10 children and 10 shillings a week! and to be sure let us set to and bemoan the blacks afterwards, and sign the Sutherland House Womanifesto! The happiness of these niggers is quite a curiosity to witness. The little niggers are trotting and grinning about the streets, the women are fat and in good case, I wish you could see that waiter at our hotel with 5 gold medals in his shirt, 2 gold chains and a gold ring. The African Church on a Sunday I am told is a perfect blaze of pea-green, crimson, ear-rings, lace collars, satin and velvet which the poor darkies wear. I don't mean to say that Slavery is right, but that if you want to move your bowels with compassion for human unhappiness, that sort of aperient is to be found in such plenty at home, that it's a wonder people won't seek it there. I don't think it's of long duration though—unless perhaps in the cotton-growing countries where the whites

can't live and the negroes can. Every person I have talked to here about it deplores it and owns that it's the most costly domestic machinery ever devised. In a house where four servants would do with us (servants whom we can send about their business too when they get ill and past work, like true philanthropists as we are) there must be a dozen blacks here and the work not well done. The hire of a house slave from his owner is 120 dollars—£25, besides of course his keep clothing etc. When he is old he must be kept well and kindly, and is—the little niggers wait upon the old effete niggers. The slave-servants working in the tobacco manufactories can lay up 100 dollars a year. The rule is kindness, the exception no doubt may be cruelty. The great plenty in this country ensures everyone enough to eat—and the people here entreat me to go on a plantation, to go about by myself, ask questions how and where I like and see if the black people are happy or not. This to be sure leaves the great question untouched that Slavery is a wrong. But if you could decree the Abolition tomorrow, by the Lord, it would be the most awful curse and ruin to the black, wh. Fate ever yet sent him. Of course we feel the cruelty of flogging and enslaving a negro—of course they feel here the cruelty of starving an English laborer or of driving an English child to a mine—Brother, Brother we are kin.

I am doing very well with the lectures—the 2 Presidents came at Washington—I've saved some money £2,000 in this country and shall probably make half as much more: but O how sick I am of the business!

I bid you a shake of the hand and am yours  
always, dear Fonblanque.

W. M. THACKERAY.

Thackeray returned from the United States in

April, 1853. In the summer of this year he took his children abroad.

*W. M. Thackeray to Mrs. Elliot and Miss Perry*

Hotel Bristol, Place Vendôme  
Wednesday [1853].

Are your travels over? are you back in Chesham Place? Has K. P.<sup>1</sup> taken her poor little holy day and sent her young people on their tour? Ours has been a very small one—to Calais which is very good fun and a great deal more French than Paris; to Spa which was very pleasant too, but for the quantity of acquaintances and  $\frac{1}{2}$  acquaintances that as père de famille I did not care to make whole acquaintances; to Dusseldorf where we passed a couple of agreeable days among the painters; and then to Aix la Chapelle which disagreed with me as it always does. Here we heard of the death of Mrs. Robert Carmichael-Smyth, my step-father's brother's wife, and thinking the family would be in trouble, and my mother (who was touring too, we did not know where) would be sure to come to Paris, we came on last Friday. But there was no granny for the girls—she is to stay the month out at Heidelberg—the daughters are gone to stay with a cousin of ours Rue Godot, where they are all very jolly together, and I am for a few days "in boy" at the Hotel Bristol; haunted by No. 1 of Mr. Thackeray's new serial<sup>2</sup> which won't leave me alone, which follows me about in all my walks, wakes me up at night, prevents me from hearing what is said at the play, and yet seems farther off than ever. It seems to me as if I had said my say, as if anything I write must be repetition, and that people will say with justice "he has worn himself out, I always told you he would, etc., etc." But 600£ is a great bribe isn't it? Suppose I do wear myself out, and that posterity say so,

<sup>1</sup> Kate Perry.

<sup>2</sup> *The Newcomes*.

why shouldn't she? and what care I to appear to future ages (who will be deeply interested in discussing the subject) as other than I really am?

My poor friend A'Becketts death has shocked me. He has left no money and hasn't insured his life—Down from competence and comfort goes a whole family into absolute penury. One boy  $\frac{1}{2}$  through the University, and likely to have done well there I believe—another at a public school, daughters with masters, and Mamma with tastes for music and millinery. What is to happen to these people? Had I dropped 3 years ago my poor wife and young ones would have been no better off. Yes, we must do the Forthcoming serial work, and never mind if it should turn out a failure. We went to see Mrs. Norton yesterday who has burned her neck severely, while shielding her little grandchild—a little black eyed curly pated lazzaronykin Brinsley's daughter—That fellow would be a good character for a book—and his mother too if one could but say all one thought—but in England we are so awfully squeamish—Ah—if one's hands were not tied there might be some good fun in that forthcoming Serial—You see I always come back to it—in fact this very sheet of paper was pulled out for the purpose of writing a page, only somehow it has taken the direction of Chesham Place and will be read I hope to-morrow by my bonnes sœurs. Are you all in London? Ah me! What letters I have written in this very room at this table some 5 years since. It is a nice quiet room—away from the noisy street. I daresay the Zouaves are playing their music in the Place Vendôme at this very moment. Blow away trumpets! We saw the men yesterday. They are magnificent looking warriors that's certain. The town is getting too handsome for them. I miss my old corners—my dining-places have disappeared and palaces stand in their stead: but the Palais Royal looking seedy and deserted consoles me: and one

gets a good time among the pictures at the Louvre, and with the pleasure of the girls. What shall I do, if any scoundrel of a husband takes away Anny's kind cheerfulness from me?

I have been twice to the theayter but can't sit out the plays—the *Dame aux Camélias* I could not bear beyond the second act: it is too wicked: and so is the *Juif Errant*—I had intended to go to a screaming farce last night, but came home instead to think about the—Plague take it! Here is the Forthcoming Serial come up again! Well, you let me say whatever is in my mind, and you know of some people who are always there. God bless them all says

W. M. T.

*W. M. Thackeray to Mrs. Carmichael-Smyth*

Saturday  
[Autumn 1853].

MY DEAREST MAMMY.—I only got last night the last proof sheets of No. 1 of the *Newcomes*: Doyle has been three weeks doing the engravings and they are not so good as mine now they are done. And I have been delayed by Governesses, and this mg. comes a letter wh. may defer the Roman trip altogether—a proposal from a publisher to edit Horace Walpole's letters wh. is just the sort of work I should like—such as would keep me at home pleasantly employed some evenings and pottering over old volumes (I'm flying from pen to pen to see which will answer best) of old biographies and histories.

When the imaginative work is over, that is the kind of occupation I often propose to myself for my old age. This and the governess business may keep me 3 or 4 days more. But don't please be disquieted on my score. The little trip to Brighton always braces and benefits me. If I dared to have 3 houses at a time, I would have taken a lodging there for a fortnight. My good nature has kept me out

of a fortnight's work here, for my visitors, the best of people, put me out of my way, and I can't write for them.

The girls especially Minny want a woman always with them. Three hours a day of Miss Colmache isn't enough. There came a Ger-woman the other day: but well enough recommended as times go. But I found I couldn't live with her. There are some people, ever so many, who shut me up or drive me to my own room and this would be one: and I must send her a congé and look elsewhere. Now that the Roman trip is doubtful, the Governess is not so necessary perhaps.

We had a pleasant little journey to Oxfordshire did the children tell you?—and as for that Brighton it's wonderful how it seems to answer with me. I found myself longing to get to work: and wrote a ballad<sup>1</sup> there, day before yesterday, with quite a juvenile pluck. As for appetite it is quite marvellous how that grows there. I wonder is Kensington unwholesome, or is it only fancy on my part?

Charles has been here hunting all over the house for fancied goods of his. What a strange mania! We have seen the poor Brookfields and the moral I have come to is "Thou shalt not pity thy neighbour's wife." Keep out of his Harem; and it is better for you and him. I send you a line only to tell you that I'm quite well: we shall let the Emperor go through Boulogne before we land there: and then may we have a couple of nice months with my dear old G. P. and Mother.<sup>2</sup>

W. M. T.

<sup>1</sup> *Organ Boy's Lament.* The last poem he ever published in *Punch*.

<sup>2</sup> Passages from this letter were quoted by my mother in her Biographical Introduction to *The Newcomes*.

*Notes on Family History*

My sister was thirteen and I was sixteen, when we went to Paris one autumn with my father, and from Paris to Rome where we spent the winter.

It seemed all golden, like the great pictures at Venice, when we landed at Civita Vecchia. I have never been there again, but I dare say it all looks just the same, the blue sky and beggars in the sun, the shadows and the old sloping ruins and arched palaces.

As we got to Rome it was evening, and my father said, "See! there is St. Peter's," and we looked out, and a great dark living sort of dome seemed to hunch up its shoulders as we drove along under the stars; next a sentry stopped us, and then we rattled through the streets to our hotel in the Condotti. The next morning, when I looked out, I saw a bandit and an Italian woman with a red bodice and white sleeves walk by the window, and all the bells were jangling. My father took a lodging in a great Palazzo and hired an old cook called Octavia, and Papa's servant Charles waited upon us, and used to fetch us from the tea parties and friends' houses to whom we went. The two people we liked best in Rome were Mrs. Browning and Mrs. Sartoris. Walter Scott's son-in-law, Mr. Lockhart, was there. I am glad to think that I once saw him. Only once just before he died. It was one early afternoon in the Piazza at Rome. Mrs. Sartoris came out of some doorway near which her carriage was waiting, not drawn to the road-side but standing well out, and the sick man was sitting inside propped up with pillows. She laid her hand upon my arm and said: "That is Lockhart. Fanny and I are going to take him for a drive in the Campagna." He looked very ill, very noble, like a solemn brooding Eagle, silent and mysterious. He was wrapped in a cloak and wore some soft travelling cap, I only saw his profile, and the pale, clear-cut features I stood

looking up with a thrill, for the incident trifling as it was, impressed me. The sick man, the great Campagna waiting for him, the good and loving company, the glorious warmth of land and sky, I shall never forget.

Minny and I used to write for Papa a great deal at his dictation, and it was here at Rome when we gave a children's party that he drew us all the funny pretty pictures for the Rose and the Ring. The little children for whom he first drew the pictures are grown up and married people now and Pen Browning can make pictures for himself.

My father was very ill in Rome and then we went to Naples and one evening we were out late in a beautiful sunset and the next day I awoke with a sore throat and a headache, and all day long it got worse, and the doctor came and said it was scarlatina, and Minny jumped up in the night and gave me water to drink. Nobody was such a good nurse as Minny.

Her little hands always seemed to send pain away—when her kitten was ill she stroked it quite well, and once she kept a little fly in a doll's teapot for two days with rose leaves. We told her it was dead, but she would not hear of it, and the second day she took up the lid to put some sugar crumbs in, and out flew the little fly !

Thackeray in his lecture on *Charity and Humour* refers to Minny when he says :

"All children ought to love him (Dickens); I know two that do, and read his books ten times for once they peruse the dismal preachments of their father.

"I know one who when she is happy, reads *Nicholas Nickleby*; when she is unhappy reads *Nicholas Nickleby*; when she is tired reads *Nicholas Nickleby*; when she is in bed reads *Nicholas Nickleby*; when she has nothing to do reads *Nicholas*

*Nickleby*, and when she has finished the book reads *Nicholas Nickleby* again

"This candid young critic of ten years of age, said 'I like Mr Dickens's books better than your books, Papa,' and frequently expressed the desire that the latter author should write a book like one of Mr Dickens's books Who can?"



## V

1854—1860

AFTER his return from Rome, Thackeray left 13, Young Street, and moved to 36, Onslow Square. My mother writing of the new house in her Journal says, "It was a pleasant bowery home with green curtains and carpets, our windows looked out upon the elm trees of Onslow Square. We lived for seven years at No 36, where so many things happened which were beyond me, and where so many things were said which I did not follow. In those days I was more used to look at my father's guests than to speak to them."

*W. M. Thackeray to Mrs. Carmichael-Smyth*

36, Onslow Square  
[1854]

<sup>1</sup> *My dearest Grannie,—Papa says you've been in a fright about my ankle, but it is very much better, and I manage with the very greatest difficulty, to keep the young woman quiet.*

Only since the last 4 days I have got into full work again. It was impossible before with the racket of moving and the hammering and ringing of bells incessantly going on—but now the stream is beginning to flow again and the old mill-wheel to turn.

I have begun a piece of buffoonery for *Punch*, wh. will pay the rent of the Château at Boulogne,<sup>2</sup> and have done a month's number of it already. I didn't get your letter till late on Saturday, that is it came in at 3, and opening it to see that all was well, I went

<sup>1</sup> These two first lines are in my mother's handwriting  
<sup>2</sup> A house he had taken for the summer

on with my work till 7 o'clock, and then found too late that you wanted an immediate answer.

I have a party for Miss Thackeray on the 21 wh I wish her to be at and introduce her to some folks who will be kind [to] her next year and I am engaged to dinner up to the 24th, after wh I shant accept any more victuals But I am in full work and dont mind and besides must stay in London over the 17th when if as I expect Doyle has not done the *Newcome* plates I shall take them in hand and do them henceforth myself

Enter Honeywood, Mark, Mrs Cole, Mr Sleap the amanuensis, a man with a bill, a messenger from Mrs King about an invitation for the young ladies requiring an answer Mr T must see all these and give an answer, and at 2 Mr T must take Miss Hughes and the girls to the Crystal Palace (I shall make Anny go about in a chair) but Anny and I have done a couple of pages of *Newcomes* upstairs already, and now I've only 5 more notes to write before going out

O what a row and a racket it is! But it is pleasant enough. When Anny could walk, we 3 had plenty of pleasant walks together She goes on Wednesday 14 to Mrs Marshall's music, Wednesday 21 to Mrs Bates's music I think it is possible that Lord Palmerston will ask me on Saturday to dinner wh. I don't choose to refuse him again I was obliged to do so last week being engaged to Tennant And he is the man who has Police Magistracies in his gift O thou schemer and artful dodger! Monday 25 is the day I ultimatumly fix for the movement of these forces<sup>1</sup> The bed room I shall have, is for *anyone* There is a very good study for me on the ground floor off the dining room, another for the girls off the drawing room The best bed room of course is for my Mamma and the room next for the Major I shall put Sleap the Amanuensis in a lodging in the town (he will

<sup>1</sup> To the house Thackeray had taken for the summer

follow after us probably) and bring Charles and Eliza, and Grey the cook subsequently. It is a big house and there will be plenty of work for the servants, and Annette's valuable services will be absolutely necessary as aide-cuisine and interpreter. What a comfort I have devised that little scheme for paying the rent! and can pay a month of it by a day's work!

Here ends the rigmarole dashed off in a furious hurry. Aren't there all those other notes to write and aren't I, always writing or not, my dearest old Mammy's and G Ps

W. M. T

*A Journal written by Anny Thackeray at the age of seventeen*

*For the week ending Sunday 18th February, 1854*  
Being minded to keep a record of those adventures which I hope are going' to happen to me, I begin to-night to write down my week's doings and I have no doubt this diary will last just as long as the thirty others that I have commenced!

*Sunday* I in my right of out young lady, presided at a dinner party which Papa said was exceedingly stupid. Mr Millais was there, a tall good-looking Pre-Raphaeliteish young man with a quantity of wavy hair, and I listened with great eagerness, for all the valuable remarks he was to let drop. Mr Leech and his wife came and Peter Cunningham and his, also Mr Phillips, Mr Charles Taylor and others

Grannie sent us a long letter for Valentine's day and I to my great delight got a mysterious Valentine called "The Pervert" with C de Pryme's name written on the bottom

*Friday* Uncle Arthur, Aunt Shawe and Mr. Fitzgerald dined, he was more melancholy than ever and

told Papa he wouldn't come again—"that everyone had had enough of Fitz"

*Saturday* I paid some of my first visits. Lady Airlie, Mrs Procter, Mrs James, Lady Rodd, Mrs Ford, and Mrs Frederick Elliot where I went in a dreadful fright to one of those "Tea's" they give now before dinner

*Sunday* A great event, Amy's<sup>1</sup> brother Joe came back from the Crimea, with a red beard and lots of money Joe says he is quite a lion at the Clubs, and Papa wants him to make a lecture

*Monday* Papa reads us his play that they won't have at the Olympic, *The Shorn Lamb*, and we thought it capital fun The first act was rather long, but the second as good as anything I have ever heard

*Tuesday.* We walked out and saw the skating on the Serpentine with Uncle Arthur and Miss Evans I think Miss Evans is one of the most perfect ladies I know.

In the evening Joe<sup>2</sup> came to dinner, and poor fellow he has brought home an intermittent fever amongst other things from the Crimea, and after dinner I got ready and put on a white gown and a white cloak and went to two parties Mrs Brookfield's, where I fell in love with Miss Geraldine Mildmay and where I saw the Sterlings, also Mrs Prinsep and Mrs. Cameron, Mr Maurice and many more I was very sorry to go away to Mrs Ford's, which was so stupid and where we only stayed a quarter of an hour. The only thing I cared for there was a lame Crimean.

*Wednesday.* We dined at Little Holland House, where we met Tom Taylor and had a pleasant party.

<sup>1</sup> Amy Crowe, an adopted daughter of the house She married our cousin—now Sir Edward Thackeray, V C, K.C B. She died June, 1863, and was the mother of Margie and Annie to whom so many of my mother's letters are written

<sup>2</sup> Sir Joseph Crowe, K C M G, C B, is best known for his History of Italian Art, in conjunction with Cavalcaselle

*Thursday* We didn't do anything remarkable I ventured rashly into a house in search of Mrs. Cameron, and presently I was met by a severe young lady with a lot of little dogs barking at her heels, who said, with great dignity, "There must be some mistake, I am Miss Gammon!"

*Friday.* I wrote for Papa and Mr Morgan John dined with us, full of the theatricals they are getting up for poor Mr Reach There came a long letter from Grannie, a sort of leading article abusing the ministry of Lord Palmerston all except Mr Roebuck

Joseph Hume died this week, there was a life of him in the *Times*

*Saturday* A dreary foggy day and I stopped at home writing<sup>1</sup> for Papa

*Tuesday* Rain still and mud We walked round and round the Square, and in and out, and Amy went out with her brother, and Papa and Minny and I dined together off a leggacio di muttone

*Wednesday.* I had an invitation from Mrs. Thomson Hankey but Papa could not take me, having a public dinner to attend, at which he made the most beautiful impromptu speech as I have good reason to know, as he delivered it to me from his bed the day before

*Thursday* Madame Marochetti came to dinner with her son Maurice, such a nice modest lad The Baroness enflamed me with a desire for early rising and I accordingly got up at 6 o'clock the next morning and did nothing till breakfast

*Sunday, March 4th.* A very dreary day for us The sky was so bright and blue and my poor Papa lay ill in bed with one of his attacks In the afternoon Amy and I went to Church at St Pusey's hard by There were four children christened, Grace Emma, Anne Caroline, Charles John, and Charles Frederick I wonder what is going to happen to them, and

<sup>1</sup> *The Newcomes,*

whether Grace will become Mrs Charles John, and Anne Caroline, Mrs Charles Frederick? and whether they will lead calm happy lives and be buried in the little churchyard.

It's rather awful to think that all this nonsense I am writing here will be alive and full of meaning years after I too am lying in Kensal Green, and I wonder what will be written on these clean white pages of my diary, so silent and blank as to the future, so mournful and full of meaning as to the past, perhaps

*Wednesday* Mr FitzGerald and Mr Spedding came to dine, and were as kind and queer and melancholy as men could be I think the company of these kind old friends did my father more good than a dozen bottles of black dose alias poison

*Thursday, September 30th* We set off for Mr. Leech's and lost our way completely before we found out his address from the Sterlings in Queen Square Mrs. Leech's baby is the dearest little maid with dark solemn eyes Mr Millais has made a sketch of her We thought we almost liked his drawing better than Miss Ada herself. I wish she hadn't that ridiculous name—Ida! anything would be better It was so pretty to see those small little hands of hers ordering and forcing about her severe Aunt Esther as if she were the autocrat of all the Russias That makes me wonder how I can put down all this nonsense when such news has come in this week The death of Nicholas, the battle of Eupatoria,<sup>1</sup> and the birth of an arch-duchess

What a queer thing it is to think that I care more if my father's finger aches than if the whole Imperial family be extinguished. That to me everything happens only to make part of *my* existence Kings die, armies are defeated, treaties signed, victories won—all are parts of this tremendous play. To

<sup>1</sup> A Russian defeat in the Crimea

myself it seems acted for *me alone*, and I suppose it does to every other human creature

Perhaps these times appear differently to me, to what they do to every other mind? Perhaps Minny sees the trees blue not green, and Amy thinks them red How is it that we do not all like the same persons? Mr FitzGerald was praising Mrs — the other day who bothers me and Papa too, beyond expression—simply because she always puts her head on one side. Perhaps Mr FitzGerald thinks I can carry my head on one side, and that the tower of Pisa is straight and Nelson's column leaning to the right Goodnight Mr FitzGerald Poor Minny wants to blow the candle out and go to sleep, and I don't think she can be very much interested in the above horizontal reflections, inflections I mean, or perhaps inflictions

We had a young ladies' tea-party last Tuesday.  
N B It was rather stupid

*Friday.* Went to Mrs Elliot's where we found those kind Miss Barings and Henry Philip van Artevelde Taylor, a grand looking man with a high forehead, whom I felt very proud of talking to. I went back to Mrs Brookfield's and had a long talk with her I hope I didn't say anything I ought not.

*Sunday* Going to St Luke's we heard the best sermon that was ever preached almost, about Charity, from Charles Kingsley

On Monday I went to a party at Mrs Mildmay's and afterwards to Mrs Ford's where I was introduced to Mrs Norton. O' what a handsome woman she is. She said, shaking her head: "I have often heard about you. How is your sister? Does she help you to dress and do your hair? I always used to dress *my* sister's hair when I was a girl." I don't think she cared immensely as she turned away before I could answer

*Tuesday* I forgot, but *Wednesday* I went to tea at

Miss Belle Smith's Miss Parkes was there and Mrs. Howitt, who announced her opinion that women should sit in Parliament

*Sunday 25th March* I went to Church and I forget what happened afterwards The next day to Mrs. Rees who instead of being in misery and a garret, we found very cheerful and comfortable We dined at Mrs Freeks where Mr Douglas made himself most fascinating and I am sure it was very good fun

*Friday* Mrs Brookfield and I went out shopping to buy some flowers for me to wear at Lady Palmerston's party and after a great deal of trouble that important business was completed and Miss Thackeray appeared with an elegant clump of wild roses and may flowers stuck in her dress

*Saturday* A very eventful day, my pleasure was rather marred at first, by a scolding from Papa which I quite deserved, as I invariably keep him waiting I was introduced to more Lords at Lady Palmerston's than I ever had seen in my life before. Lord Somers, Carlisle (Viceroy of Ireland) Tollington Lady Georgina Fullerton who won my heart, Lady Aylesbury and Lady—I have forgotten her name

*Sunday* I'm ashamed to say I didn't go to church, but I made a picture which was so bad I could scarcely believe I had done it myself

*Tuesday* I got a letter from Mrs Fanshawe, I think I will copy it out and keep it for ever, in case I am in want of advice

*June 9th 1855.* And now my birthday has come round again and I have been determining to spend my eighteenth better than my seventeenth year, and to be less sentimental more cheerful and honest and charitable

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*W M. Thackeray to Anny Thackeray*

*June 9 [1855].*

My dearest Nan must have a paternal God bless you to-day—many such please God may I send you You see every year now as you grow older we shall grow more intimate, at least I hope and think so · and as it is an ascertained fact that I can't live without female friends I shall have a pair at home, in my own women, who'll understand my ways, laugh at my jokes, console me when I'm dismal etc , as is the wont and duty of women in life Less and less of the Season every year, seems to suffice for me now · and I have had almost enough now in ten days after the twentieth at any rate I will have no more, unless I should give way to a project I have sometimes of uttering a lecture about the United States , which no doubt people would crowd to hear. Several persons have urged me to do this , and if I had my Secretary<sup>1</sup> here, who knows what might happen ? But without one I cannot positively get on . and dawdle through the days meanwhile, doing nothing.

... What shall be my dear Nan's birthday present ? You two can have what you want any day as well as a birthday. That's why I don't think of such gifts for you

The edition of the Lectures is nearly all sold and a new one ordered People are thinking of other things now however, and whether we are to have a war or not is the question over wh all men look glum, and I am my darling Nanny's affectionate Father

W M T

*Journal 1855*

*June 10th* I have been out a good deal with my father Once I went to a most splendid reception at Lord Lansdowne's. The gentlemen all in court

<sup>1</sup> His daughter Anny

dress and the ladies in their very best—Lord Cardigan, Sir Charles Napier and Admiral Dundas

Serena left town after writing me a noble letter and I felt so ashamed and so wicked that I should have liked to—I don't know what

We had a pleasant little trip to Gravesend and Rochester, and coming home my Father had some dinners at which his daughter presided, I fear with very small grace But tant-pis, when I'm older I hope I shall do it better.

*Saturday* I went to Lady Molesworth's and Sunday we had Mr. Kingsley's brave sermon And I wish I could do something better than make good resolutions

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*W. M Thackeray to Miss Perry*

36, Rue Godot-de-Mauroy, Paris

*July 2nd [1855]*

MES BONNES SŒURS,—I think it is time you should hear from your elderly relative, and as J may be on her way to her holy days and Miss K I know is in England, I write my little line to Eaton Place West wishing my very best wishes to all J's. and K's. We have had a pretty busy pleasant time here, except that as in London and everywhere else there has been a little too much feasting for me, too much Burgundy, too much Bordeaux Isn't this hot weather feverish enough without these stirrers of the blood? I have cut off 2 dinners for to-day and to-morrow. It is true they would have been very stupid but it's at those stupid dinners the Claret is most dangerous.

Last Thursday, the 28th. at 7 o'clock in the evening, I wrote the last lines of the poor old *Newcomes* with a very sad heart. And afterwards what do you think I did? Suppose I said my prayers, and humbly prayed God Almighty to bless those I love and who love me, and to help me to see and speak the truth

and to do my duty? You wouldn't wonder at that would you? That finis at the end of a book is a solemn word One need not be Mr Gibbon of Lau-sanne to write it. There go 2 years more of my life spent over those pages I was quite sorry to part with a number of kind people with whom I had been living and talking these 20 months past, and to draw a line so ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ on a sheet of paper, beyond which their honest figures couldn't pass, and that melancholy leave taken I went out to dine by myself, and to see a Pantomime over which I fell into a sweet roseate slumber The girls were gone to see the great Italian tragedian, the Ristori who was acting Mary Stuart that night, but I thought it would be pleasanter to see Clown jump through a window than a Queen have her wicked head chopped off By the way she is not made wicked in the play It is Schillers and she is as pure as Alabaster

I have been twice or thrice to the Exposition des Bosarts The English Pictures show very well indeed I think. One night with Machise, the painter, I went to the Château des Fleurs which inspired him with ravishment and me with mortal melancholy. Crowds were standing round Lais and Phryne dancing the cancan—all sorts of elderly fogies and respectable people What was Bonneval doing at the Castle of Flowers I should like to know? Venait il en cueiller le monstre—leaving his own languid lily at home? At Lady Ashburton's next day there was the Duchesse d'Istrie at dinner—beautifulsplendid a thought aged and stale—she put me in mind of the handsome wicked Château des Fleurs Merimée came in—its very odd, admiring his writing as I do, what an antipathy I have to him. I had a capital breakfast with honest Jules Janin, who lives up in his cinquième quite poor and honest and merry. I went moreover to see the *Demi-monde*. It put me in mind of myself rather—it's a comedy of Beckys

and Madame de Cruchecassés and the like It is wonderfully acted—there is a man—M Dupuis the Jeune premier who is quite a pleasure to behold so easy quiet nonchalant and gentlemanlike is he And these Mesdames I think have been all my doings. If any of our friends want to hear about them you can say please God bless all friends. We grow old, we work and struggle on with our days burthens we groan and we laugh and we scheme for next year—and lo the end comes, doesn't it? This letter is not gay eh! what will you? One is no longer gay at our age, one is content The girls are very well. Anny is a perfect well-spring of happiness in herself. Thank God The thought of parting with them for the American expedition disgusts me more and more Fired with emulation by Dickens's capital speech I have been getting one up—another—but not so good as his though I wonder whether I shall come back to London by next Wednesday week to speak it? I don't know in the least what I'm going to do but am yours always my dear kind friends,

W M T.

*Journal 1855*

*Wednesday, August, the month.* I wrote about the apartment<sup>1</sup> to-day which gives one a turn. O my dear Papa

We have been away to Paris and Baden and Hombourg and we came home by the Rhine and Brussels and Dover, but it all feels like a dream. I see our drives driving off farther and farther and the music we heard sounds fainter and fainter

We had a long pleasant walk to-day (Sunday) with our father, along the Thames to Chiswick, past quaint old Georgian houses, gaily decked with flowers and sunshine, and children playing about and kindly holiday people

<sup>1</sup> Thackeray's second visit to America was impending. He left Oct 13th, 1855. My mother and her sister went to their grandparents in Paris

*Tuesday, 14th day of August* The days keep dashing on and now it is Tuesday again, and in a few minutes it will be Wednesday and I am just come home from a not dangerously exciting party at Mr Robert Bell's.

Mrs Glass spent the day with us and she gave us some small idea of the splendour of Papa's state in America

To Hatton, the Chief Baron<sup>1</sup> as kind as could be and everybody else Julius photographed us all. The Lord Chief Baron made us each three presents.—

1 A bottle of the very best Eau de Cologne, warranted to make one perfectly lovely

2. A box of matches which when you strike a Genie appears who does anything you tell him

3 A piece of soap which when you wash yourself heals every disease and makes you perfectly invulnerable

At least I daresay that is the case, or it would have been, had we all lived once upon a time, and if Papa had been either a king or a poor woodman, and if the Chief Baron was a magician, and Hatton a castle, and if the cruel Fairy—but lo! the clock strikes, and the enchantment vanishes, the Chief Baron fades away into his castle, our Royal Father disappears to his study below, the young Prince isn't born yet, my extraordinary loveliness has disappeared, Minny's is hidden under the bed-clothes, the soap is lying resignedly in the soap-dish, the Eau de Cologne is bubbling in the uncorked bottle, and as for the matches! I am sure if they don't take care, their rage will set themselves and the books on fire, and what will become of the poor Genie then?

O why am I writing about matches and fairy tales when the bells have been ringing for the taking of Sebastopol, the guns are firing from Cremorne? —

<sup>1</sup> Sir Frederick Pollock, Bart., Chief Baron of the Exchequer

*Sept 21st* Ten more pleasant days are gone and that fatal 13th of October<sup>1</sup> comes nearer and nearer I found Madame D'Arblay in my father's room yesterday, and that has excited me to go on with my own journal and I am seriously thinking of sending a Pepysina of my own to Messrs Bradbury and Evans Evelyn, she says, was taken from Evelyn

I am very sorry that I have not written down minutely all that I have seen and heard Surely Mr Carlyle is our Dr Johnson and I don't think my father is unlike Goldsmith, I am sure that he has as tender a heart though perhaps a better head Mr. Frederick Tennyson dined here the other day with a Jewish painter, Mr Solomon Hart. As I had not read Madame D'Arblay then, I don't remember much of their conversation They talked a good deal about Italy and Italian politics, about Florence and the bad society there, about Lever who puts all his acquaintances into his books—and then they began to speak of bigotry and the domination of the priests

I have been drawing pictures for Aunt Shawe but I care for too many things ever to do one perfectly. At one minute I'm mad to be an artist, the next I languish for an author's fame, the third, I would be mistress of German, and the fourth practise five hours a day at the pianoforte

At Mrs Browning's where we went one day to thank her for some kind enquiries after me—(One day I suddenly fell to the ground fainting, it was horrible) B R P<sup>2</sup> was there talking intellectually. Mrs. Browning said she saw no reason why without illness the mind should ever fail B R P made a good many good-natured remarks upon the subject, but complained the next day when we went to see

<sup>1</sup> The day of Thackeray's departure for America.

<sup>2</sup> Bessie Rayner Parkes, afterwards Madame Belloc, the mother of Mrs Belloc Lowndes and Hilaire Belloc

her, that Mrs. Browning did not give evidence enough of a poetic mind I laughed and said that was why it was so strong when it did appear, that keeping it bottled up like that, it came out with much



*From a sketch by A. T. in her Journal*

greater force, than if she let her ideas come dribbling out here there and everywhere.

I think Mrs. Browning the greatest woman I ever

knew in my life. She is very very small, not more than four feet eight inches I should think. She is brown, with dark eyes and dead brown hair, and she has white teeth and a low harsh voice, her eyes are bright and full of life, she has a manner full of charm and kindness. She rarely laughs, but is always cheerful and smiling. She is great upon mysticism and listens with a solemn eager manner to any nonsense people like to tell her upon that subject. Her husband is not unlike her. A dark, short man, slightly but nervously built, with a frank open face, long hair streaked with grey and a large mouth which he opens widely when he speaks, white teeth, a dark beard and a loud voice with a slight lisp, and the best and kindest heart in the world.

*Monday, the 24th.* I have been hard at work upon Madame D'Arblay and have nearly finished four volumes since Friday. Reading a book is not the business it used to be in her day, when Queen Charlotte asked Princess Augusta's advice as to whether she should read *Camilla* at once quickly, or wait till they went to Windsor. Fancy anybody waiting till they got to Windsor to begin a novel! Miss Burney is delightful. It's almost as good as if it wasn't true.

Madame D'Arblay is ruining my good intentions of getting up early. I am rarely able to read her in the day time, and then I can't drag myself away at night. I gave her up yesterday for something far less entertaining—Captain Mark, Maria and Eleanor. The evening however was not as bad as I expected. Captain Mark politely requested us all round to favour him with a little music, and then sitting down at the piano himself played a little tune with one finger, at which his daughters laughed good naturedly, I can remember his doing it last time, I think it was the same tune and the same finger.

This morning we rushed into Papa's study, he

was sitting in a funny costume writing in his scrap book, and he left off and kissed us, and looked at us with his dear kind eyes, and told us to give him a tendero embracciamento. He laughed, and said Mr Hodder had been copying something for him at the British Museum, about Lady Something who was always called "the Ang Anglais." Whereupon the Hodder, justly reasoning that the lady was feminine, altered it with the greatest presence of mind to an ange anglaise

There has been a dismal parting in the house just now Mrs Bakewell came to fetch away our little dog Browny to live with Mama Ever since my Minny's poor little nose has grown redder and redder, and the tears keep dribbling out of her eyes

As we shut the front door Browny looked up at us so wistfully, to see if we were coming too

I think I could almost cry as Minny is doing but I am sure Mama will like her very much O' my dear Browny shall we ever see you again ?

In her *Notes on Family History*, written in 1894, my mother describes her life at Paris during Thackeray's absence

When my father went away to America for the second time, we went off to Paris with Mrs Sartoris We lived in a little apartment next Grannie and learnt to play the piano, and to draw with the Dickens's, and French with a master, and looked for letters from week to week They came with pretty good news, and we led a very pleasant life

We used to go to tea at Mrs Sartoris's who now lived in Paris, in a beautiful old house in the Rue Royale, she used to have music there and pink lamps, and beautiful ladies came and grand looking gentlemen. Of an evening she used to sing most wonderfully, and the house seemed all full of light and music.

One day I went to dine with Mrs Sartoris, and after dinner she took me to the play,—and while the play was acting she said "Look!" and there in a box was a lady with coal black hair and a hard red face and a light black silk dress and a cameo brooch. "That is George Sand, my child," said Mrs Sartoris I was very glad to have seen her once tho' I did not think she looked very nice or at all like her beautiful thoughts

Mrs Browning was also in Paris this winter, in a little warm, sunny, shabby, happy apartment, with a wood fire always burning, and a big sofa, where she sat and wrote her books out of a tiny inkstand, in her beautiful delicate handwriting Mr Browning would come in and talk Pen was a little boy with long curls, and some of the grand gentlemen from Mrs. Sartoris' used to come in and sit round the fire

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*W M. Thackeray to Mrs. Carmichael-Smyth*

[1855]

In both visits to America I have found the effects of the air here the same I have a difficulty in forming the letters as I write them down on this page—in answering questions, in finding the most simple words to form the answers A gentleman asked me how long I had been in New York?—I hesitated and then said a week—I had arrived the day before—I could not gather my thoughts together readily enough to be able to reply to him—hardly know what is said, am thinking of something else, nothing definite, with an irrepressible longing to be in motion I sleep 3 hours less than in England, making up however with a heavy long sleep every 4th night or so Talking yesterday with a very clever man (T. Appleton of Boston), he says the effect upon him on his return from Europe is the same—There is some electric influence in the air and sun here wh. we don't experience on our side of the globe. Under this sun

people can't sit still, people can't ruminate over their dinners, dawdle in their studies and be lazy and tranquil—they must keep moving, rush from one activity to another, jump out of sleep and to their business, have lean eager faces—want to dash into the street now. At home after breakfast I want to read my paper leisurely and then get to my books and work

The men here read surprisingly, one tells me—a busy man keeping a great Store in the City—that he does all his reading in the railway-cars as he comes in and out from his country residence daily Fancy an English City Grocer reading Tennyson and Browning on his way from Brighton to Bread Street every day! A look over the *Times*, a snooze for the rest of the journey wd be enough for him Yesterday as some rain began to fall, I felt a leaden cap taken off my brain pan and began to speak calmly and reasonably, and not wish to quit my place<sup>1</sup>

We are going to a party of 4 to dine with Mr Dening Duer, banker—most kind worthy man. We crossed at the Ferry whence the Liverpool steamers sail (I had my wishes as I saw one there in the dock)—the pavement is infernal—disgraceful to a great City—the steam ferry boat admirably commodious—(everybody has described the steam ferry boats) We drove through a part of Jersey City—a great raw comfortless city it is, and presently through the grounds of Mr King's country place, wh. are famous for their beauty—A fine thunder storm darkened the place as we passed it and a hurricane blew for a minute—I could only see in the grounds, very lean spindle shanked little trees with their naked branches shivering—about Mr Duer's house were the same scrubby melancholy bushes. I had been looking at sketches (by an excellent artist, Kensett), of New England

<sup>1</sup> These two paragraphs were quoted by my mother in her Biographical Introductions to *The Virginians*, and *The English Humourists*

wood and sea-shore scenery, and the character of them seemed to be scraggy wan melancholy

I went to see Laurence<sup>1</sup> who is doing very well. It does me good says he, to see an English coat—I understand the home feeling An English servant maid opened the door at a friend's house yesterday and spoke with her kind modest way—My man complains sadly that no one will speak a civil word to him—those polite accents wh. we remember in Ireland from the people, are changed here to a brusque sharp nasal defiant tone—not sweet to listen to Looking for my companion the other day, as we arrived from Boston through a line of several cars—the cars set off in motion down the street. I begged the driver to let me out, and he began through his nose, a shrill blast of curses quite curious to hear—he was only squealing the steam off. "Thar! Now! Jomp farrerd," says he not unkindly and I jumped and ran back to the Station

Saturday 17. Dined with Mr C. King—son of a Minister to England—A man of fortune once, as some of his brothers still are—then unlucky—Editor of *The American* newspaper—now President of Columbia College, lively amusing bright well-read thorough gentleman of the old school—very few like him. Was at school at Harrow with Peel and Byron—spoke still in admiration of Byron's pluck Harrow challenged Eton to a match at cricket Eton wh. had just been playing Westminster refused Harrow, saying that "Eton only played matches with schools of royal foundation."—"I am not good at cricket" said Byron, alluding to his foot, "but if you will get up an eleven to fight an Eton eleven I should like to be one of our's"

Peel, a lazy boy not mingling in games at all, was very good-natured The boys would crowd round him before going into school begging Peel to

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Laurence the artist.

do their verses—Greek Iambics or Latin Hexameters, nothing came amiss to him, and he would scribble off copy after copy of verses for the idle or dull ones. He was celebrated as a "shy"—his pleasure was to walk the fields solitary with a pocket-full of nice round stones, and if he saw a bird on a bough, to fire at it, and his skill was such as to bring down one bird in three—he would bring home strings of little birds with him. Byron would have been good-looking but his complexion was tallowy and his black hair had a greasy look—

*Novr 20 N Y*

This is not very good fun is it? I don't know that it's worth keeping a journal but I think I shall go on—got my dear old Mother's letter and am thankful all are so well and busy. The lectures go better and better, the lecturer very well—God bless all at home, he says, and O but he longs to be there! Haven't been able to write this morning for the visitors pouring in.

W. M. T.

*W. M. Thackeray to Mrs. Frederick Elliot*

New York  
November 27, [1855]

O you kind friend who ask me for nice long letters, you little know how difficult it is to write 'em! Three days ago to Anny I began and wrote 10 lines—never 10 minutes leisure have I had since—the room is never clear of visitors. I have been lecturing every night except 2 in the week, and in the intervals fever and ague Isn't it good fun? Four attacks this month, and yet merrily I have never missed a lecture—only a dinner or a breakfast or two wh would be more pleasant than shuddering in bed but wh I don't care for losing. What a comfort it was to me to get your letter on Sunday Mrs J. E.<sup>1</sup>—and to hear your voices again after this long silence

<sup>1</sup> Jane Elliot.

I have been away for 2 days to Troy on the Hudson River and staid with some kind people, English and of the H. droppers too, but very good and hearty, at a pretty country house between Troy and Albany—preached to a multitude at the former place, pocketted 200 dollars, agreed to go back again day after Christmas—spending the Anniversary with my English friends, and think that country the prettiest I have seen in the States The river is like unto a certain Rhine we saw together, Albany is a fair old city with some houses 100 years old Troy very picturesque, in fact it was a pleasant trip but for the 5 hours journey in the stifling cars where your feet freeze whilst your head throbs with heat What very small beer is this I am letting run<sup>1</sup>! This gay world of New York I have not seen. I am not a man I'm a lecturer this time

Of all the birds in bush or tree though many be more gay,  
The one I love to hear and see, it surely is a J!  
(What matter though its wings may be a somewhat pied with grey),  
Those plumes are dearer far to me than birds of more display,  
Than Molesworth splendid as a pea-hen on a sunny day—  
Than golden pheasant Ailesbury—what other name to say?  
O happy shall that meeting be (for which my heart will pray)  
When I (as Alphabets agree) shall once more come near J  
O blessed shall the steamer be and fortunate the day  
Which sees me safe across the sea and moored besides my K<sup>1</sup>  
Quick weary months and flee and flee! Speed dreary frost away

<sup>1</sup> Kate Perry, Miss Elliot's sister

Come Spring! and those will seem to me, as welcome  
as the May!  
Quick William! go and fetch the tea and bread and  
butter tray,  
And send—next door to sixty three—and if Mr. B's  
away,  
Our best regards and Mr T has come back home  
to-day

I see 3 *days* in the rhymes and I don't know what  
more repetitions, but isn't friendship only a continuation  
of repetitions? and don't we go and see  
each other though we have no news? You must  
know I came home from visits wh I must pay thinking  
I was going to have a chill, and have been toasting  
at the fire and written myself out of it. Let us  
go out again on the tramp, and come back at night  
well after the lecture please God, and write the girls  
their letter for tomorrow's steamer. *Wednesday 28.*  
Bon jour Mesdames Adieu Mesdames.

*W. M. Thackeray to Mrs. Frederick Elliot*

Buffalo, Dec 28 New York, New Earsday  
[1856]

A friend who takes charge of me at Philadelphia  
writes me word, that several letters are there waiting  
for me—most looking like business letters—one in a  
female hand wh he daresays I should like—I wonder  
whether the female letter is from Chesham Place,  
London? I should like it to be from there What  
have I been doing since I wrote to it last?—having a  
very good time at Boston The Bostonians much  
better pleased and of course far better judges than at  
New York At Buffalo they came two nights running,  
3,000 of them! They are really surprizingly almost  
touchingly friendly. Prescott gave me his book—but  
Ticknor, whose book no one reads, is a cleverer man

than Prescott Both have comfortable old houses, handsome large libraries and famous Burgundy and Claret in their cellars So has Longfellow at Cambridge, who lives in a noble old house whilom occupied by Washington I have fallen in love with Bayard Taylor He was a poor boy almost without shoes 10 years ago, since then he has travelled the whole world over to Europe, Egypt, Nubia, China, Japan, buried a wife whom he married in the last stage of consumption—made 6000£ by his books and lectures—is coming to London in Spring and is one of the most interesting men I have ever seen in my life Lord, you should have seen the theatres full of people coming to hear yours truly! Providence is as jolly a place as Boston almost There is always a knot of pleasant folks fogeyfied respectable fond of literature with whom it is jolly to consort, and I shall remember Lawyer Ames and a nice old University Library and a half-dozen fellows with kindness always. From Boston I came 100 miles through a sweet country wondrously peopled to Greenfield—such a nice village—with such a good fellow for my host there, Hon G. T Davis, a man you'd all delight in And the people flocked through the snow and absolutely peopled the railway cars to hear the lecture Bon Dieu, what do they mean? It was Xmas Eve when I was there and in a glass of wine I drank it to friends at home, I wonder whom I thought of besides my children? Can you guess? All Xmas Day travelled to Albany and drove to Mr Dunlop's house where was the kyndest welcome and quiet, and a jolly little sleigh drive next morning through a fairyland of frozen land, river and city-scape where all the trees were glistening with silver, and all the houses iced with plum-cake snow, and so, on the 27th from Albany I came on to Buffalo wh I reached at midnight—and to-day I have been sleighing about the grim looking place and seen the darkling lake and a bow shot across

Niagara river, the black firs and glittering white houses in Canada. But I mustn't write any more of this letter but keep it for next mail Next year I am to begin at Philadelphia and then who knows whither I go? to New Orleans perhaps—but wherever I am you know there's always an electric telegraph between me and Cheshogan Place

New York, *January 1* A happy new year to all dear friends says somebody who thinks about them a great deal. What a blessing to be able to come 500 miles through the driving snow—warm, snug I was going to say comfortable, and I shd have been but for an Irishman who sate next me and had a cold and used his fingers as we use a pocket handkerchief. 20 years ago that journey wd. have taken a fortnight. Oughtn't I for one to be thankful for railroads who never could have made all these dollars without 'em? Aren't you bored by my perpetual talk about dollars? Last night 2 hours after my arrival we had a fire in the hotel Didn't I dash at my desk and sermons? It burned in a cellar but luckily the hour was early, the injines quickly on the spot—sermons, preacher, portmanteaux all were perfectly safe—and I went to sleep so sleepy that I guess I forgot even that little prayer which is said upon my pillow most nights.

Now I have put my holiday clothes on, and am going a-visiting. How will the Baxter house look now that Sally has left it? The marriage was very smart I hear—the bride looked lovely Except my own gals I tell you I care for no women under 30. Good-bye—write me again long letters you women under 30 Address henceforth care of Messrs. J. G King's, Sons, New York, and they will forward to me. So hail Fred, and God bless J and J. and K

*W M. Thackeray to Mrs Frederick Elliot*

Cairo, St Louis  
March 24-26 [1856]

I did not write to you from New Orleans, but a pleasanter thing I heard from mes bonnes sœurs. I am just off the *Thomas Small* Steamer Don't you see how my hand trembles? The boat in her passage up the river throbbed and trembled so that I thought she would shake her cranky sides off her ribs And the river or the trembling of the boat gave me a fit of my old chill and fever which served pour passer le temps and occupied one day out of the 5. "Look there, Sir!" says a cheerful friend of mine on the *Levee* at N O as we looked at a hundred enormous steamers moored there—"There, at the white mansion do you see? That post was knocked out by a piece of the boiler of the *John Jones* which burst here, Sir—here on this spot where we are standing—and the heads and mangled limbs of the people were scattered and a mule, by G—, Sir, was cut in two in a dray, and I saw it lying where you stand now!" The morning I came away I read that a ferry steamer had taken fire on the Delaware and 25 persons were killed, that the Alabama steamer on the Red River had bursted her boiler and afterwards taken fire, the number of the killed not known—pleasant wasn't it? for a man just setting out on the river journey—but it's over and we didn't blow up and we only took fire twice and burned down our upper cook house and 2 hours ago I was quite sorry to leave the *T. Small* She was very clean and the servants civil and I had Marryat's novels which kept me in amusement through Alabama and Mississippi too

He is a vulgar dog but he makes me laugh and very few can now Certainly not yours truly the author of *V F.*

Where do you think this is written from?—the

place they say that was Martin Chuzzlewit's Eden, Cairo, at the confluence of the Ohio and Miss. such a dreary Heaven abandoned place! but it will be a great city in 6 years spite of overflows and fever and ague Twelve hours to-night D.V will take me to St Louis and then I shall feel as if I am on my road home again to see my children and my bonnes sœurs

Why need I go on making a quack of myself any more? But if when I come home—after speaking of Queen Vic in the very handsomest manner, after making thousands of folks that hated him feel kindly for old George, I am attacked for speaking my mind about George IV (mind I left out the Q Caroline scandal entirely)—by Jupiter!—It will do me good I want a fight, I have always told you I can hit harder than any man alive, and I never do—but o' I think a little exercise would do me good!. . In fine I want to get home more and more every day. To do what? to dawdle about Europe again and write another novel? Who can say for to-morrow? But I want to kiss my dear children and see my bonnes sœurs and speak to people whom I *can* speak to. Two months more of the *tréteaux* and mayn't we hope for these things? Yes if winds and waves and Heaven permit I wonder after being how many whole weeks in London I shall want to be on the move again? God bless you, I keep this little piece for to-morrow and this is the 24<sup>th</sup> of March and isn't to-morrow my Lady's day?

St Louis

26 Although it was my lady's day I didn't fill the corner.

But each day here and far away I love and bless and mourn her

Upon My Lady's Eve the cars a weary wight did carry

He wakeful looked upon the stars the pinewood and the prairie.

And as the weary travel ceased the sun arose in  
splendour  
And sure he looked towards the East where dwells  
his lady tender.  
He blessed the East he blessed the mother (methinks  
'twas midday yonder).  
That saw his gentle Lady born —

And O me! I couldn't finish the rhyme haven't I had  
10 visitors? And isn't it post time now and musn't I  
put up with a kind kind greeting to mes bonnes  
sœurs.

*W. M Thackeray to his Daughters]*

Mobile Alabama.

[1856]

A welcome letter of Feb. 1 reaches me on the 29th. after such a dreary weary half dozen journeys from Savannah—to Macon 10 hours 200 miles through pine flats—3 days there and only 170 dollars for my trouble —to Columbus 100 miles in 8 hours through pine flats, to Montgomery 100 miles 7 more hours, and 100 miles more pine flats, and from Montgomery down the Alabama River to this place—where I have got into such a nice hotel into such a beautiful room, have had such a comfortable warm bath and read over a clean breakfast such a comferable letter from my women I think sometimes of writing descriptive letters with remarks on the scenery and illustrations—but I have not the face for that kind of conversation with my family. The dreariness of this country, *everywhere*, almost consumes me—there is nothing to draw—one sketch I made on the river yesterday—o what a dismal scene !!

This is what you see day after day—but the stink and the dirt, the foul glasses, the dingy shirts (many of them with grand diamond brooches making a sun-shine in those shady places) the peeps of flannel, the

Mobile Alabama  
A welcome letter of Feb 1 reaches me on the 29<sup>th</sup> after such a dreary weary half dozen journeys from Savannah - to Columbia <sup>about</sup> 10 hours, 200 miles through pine flats - 3 days there and only 170 dollars for my trouble - to <sup>Columbia</sup> Elmore 100 miles in 8 hours through pine flats, to Montgomery 100 miles 7 more hours, & 100 miles more pine flats and from about midway down the Alabama River to this place where I have got into such a nice hotel into such a beautiful room, have had such a comfortable warm bath, and read over a clean bright fast such a comfortable letter from my woman! I think sometimes of writing descriptive letters with remarks on the Scenery & institutions, but I know not the face for that kind of conversation with my family. The dreariness of this country, everywhere, almost consumes me - there is no thing to draw - one sketch I made on the river yesterday - a what a dismal scene!!



hands and nails—o my, who is to draw those? On board the boat a gentleman asked me to drink at night We go and liquor at the bar—Next day after dinner I offer *him* a drink—“Nossir I have dined, Sir—we don’t drink *after* dinner, Sir!” Before breakfast there was a fine groggy smell about the bar though What I shall never understand is how there were no bugs on board As a favour I got a basin and towel for myself—other gentlemen fixed themselves in the barber’s shop

This is far too pretty a view of the country for a thousand miles<sup>1</sup> The trees are not so tall nor can one give the ragged air wh pervades everything by any scrabble of this pen Well I am glad the journey is over so far To me it is beyond measure stupefying and depressing In the midst of it though I heard people talking about longing to get home and when they did get home, O mon dieu! It was a swampy sandflat of 100 wooden houses 4 churches and a hotel and a newspaper office—where they skipped out quite pleased to be back at this Elysium. When we emigrate it must be to live at Boston—That is a Xtian place anyhow We had beautiful weather in the steamer, and a volume of Marryat’s collected novels kept me quite amused. I might as well have seen Savannah though—This trip will not make us 100\$ the richer, 100? no scarce 50 Never mind I did for the best. How can I help it that it’s pouring with rain, so that hundreds will be kept away from hearing me tonight?

Sunday Another famous letter from my gals and their Granny But when will this one reach them? Why, it can’t leave Boston for 10 days to come And though I’ve cautioned Granny yet I know she’ll go for to frighten herself I am very well here, and as for money, how much do you think we cleared by our lecture of last night? no less a sum than three dollars The night was awful that is the truth, the rain was

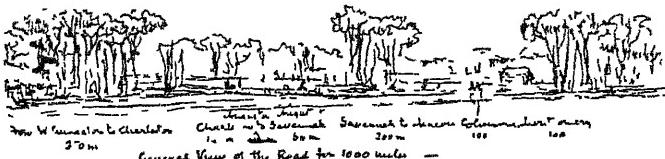
<sup>1</sup> See sketch on opposite page



at city.



"This is what you see day after day - but the stink and the dust the  
foul glasses, the dingy shirts (many of them with grand diamond brooches  
making a sunshine in those shady places) the pugs of flannel, the beards  
and nails - O my who is to draw those?"



New Orleans to Charleston  
Charleston to Savannah to New Orleans  
370m 120m 220m 100m 100m

General View of the Road for 1000 miles —

"This is far too pretty a view of the Country for a thousand miles. The trees are  
not so tall we can see over them the jagged air will pierce everything by any  
scratches of the pens. Look I am glad this journey is over so far"

making such a row on the roof of the hall that I was obliged to uplift my voice and master if possible the roar of the storm—I wonder that 120 people were to be found to venture out on such a night—The hall cost 50 dollars that was 100 of 'em—the advertisements 5 dollars, 10 people more—the door keeper 2 dollars —remain 3 for me Charles and my family But what must it be when 50 poor devils are dependent upon a theatre, and nobody comes, and they want money for their dinners and breakfasts? Afraid I shan't get those other 9000 dollars I want Well, we must be longer getting them that's all Have been to church and heard a good sermon—saw the parson at my sermon last night.

*March 4* The boat for New Orleans sails in an hour and I pop my little letter into the post beforehand Have I said that I have had famous good health here? better spirits and appetite than I've had since I've been in the States Last night was a famous full house and I hope we shall have the same at N O. where at any rate I shall have 10 jolly days, and then for the West and then for my old friends of Boston, Philadelphia, New York—and then for some older friends yet—O how welcome the end of May will be and the sight of Liverpool steeples God bless my women and my dearest old Mother & G. P —Miss Anny I insist on your having some money—and that's a famous letter about the *Cricket on the Hearth* and I am my dearest Children's loving father always

*Journal 1856*

*Friday, 3rd April* We went to meet Papa this evening at King's Cross Station, waited half an hour in dimness and desolation, till ring a ring a ring, up go the lamps, a hundred people start out of the earth, in drubs the train with its two yellow eyes flurrying along the line, out pour the passengers and we were just

getting frightened, when yes there he is And so thank God for bringing him home again Grannie had a better day than yesterday Papa has done her good already I have finished up my little medicine bottle and feel quite a dozen spoonfuls better

*Good Friday.* A very dreary sad day but I think it has given me a lesson I shall never forget, and since then, what a jolly time we have had, thanks be for that. I hope I may be better in this new three shilling diary I have treated myself to! I hope I may have as pleasant things to write about in it, as in this one Even the unpleasant things I did not write down have had a certain charm, and now as the past months are all vanishing away, they seem to glimmer brighter and brighter, and the notes to sound more beautiful as they recede. I daresay nobody could exactly see the drift of my remarks, but as I am making them to myself I don't mind so long as I understand them myself

We had a great dinner on *Easter Sunday* Albert Smith, Mr. Mayhew, Mr Lever at last, Sturgis's and Synges.

*Thursday, the 20th I believe of April* We went to tea at Mr Monckton Milnes Miss Wynn was there looking like a Queen and as I was talking to her a little old gentleman<sup>1</sup> with a decoration came up and said "You too—you go wid de papa you travels wizz 'im?" "That would never do" says Miss Wynn, for I hardly understood what he said, and was awfully pozed when a little later Papa introduced me to him as a young lady who had read his history of the Popes, and didn't know if he were Catholic or Protestant! "So · you have readz my bookes? In German? Hé hé?" "No, in English, I only wish I could read them in German." "Ah! whiche tranzlatione? the Scott—eh? eh?" I had read them it's true, about 8 years ago, and had entirely forgotten all

<sup>1</sup> Von Ranke the historian

about them and when he asked me how many volumes and what edition, I boldly said four and nervously talked about Rome, without stopping for an instant to let him make any more questions

Dean of Westminster in neat black silk stockings, and Professor Thompson<sup>1</sup> who came with us from Mrs. Macaulay's, where we went to pick up Papa in the carriage Professor Thompson, tall and good looking Papa said, "Here my dears, this is Professor Thompson, a much greater man than your father, let me tell you," and Professor Thompson was too polite I suppose to contradict this assertion He went to Cambridge the same year as Papa.

We also were made acquainted with Mr Elwin for the first time, he wears a hat very much on the back of his head, and is perfectly tremendous in enthusiasm for Professor Thompson "You're not half appreciative," Minny says he said, "not half, you should hear my wife and me," and when we asked him if Papa had told him about *The Virginians*, he cried out, "Ah noble! noble!" Well it's pleasant to have people praise Professor Thompson, and may they go on for a great many years more. That is what I do not wish the lectures to do, Papa is going away again on Monday, and it's horrible saying goodbye once a month to him<sup>2</sup>

To-day I was groaning over my Algebra when Amy shrieked out, "Look! Look! Look!" and a beautiful little open carriage drove across the retina of my far-sighted eye, and who but Papa inside (looking rather too big for it we thought) who had just bought it at the Pantheon, and instantly took a drive in his bargain.

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Master of Trinity

<sup>2</sup> After his return from America Thackeray gave his lectures on *The Four Georges* in England

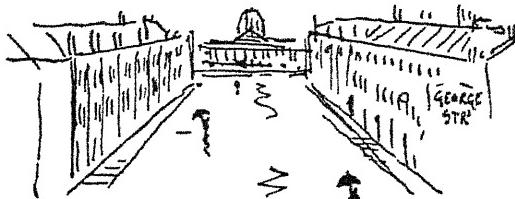
*W M Thackeray to his Daughters*

Barry's British Hotel  
Queen Street, Edinburgh  
[1856]

MY DEAR LITTLE GURGLES,—Your dear Papa arrived last night at 9 30 and commissions me to tell you that he slept satisfactorily both in bed and about half the way down losing the romantic scenery along the line and only waking up at the border to damn the railway man who asked for his ticket Your father is already a good deal engaged to dinner and his faithful servant James says that there is a very good subscription list for the lectures—but your Papa suspects that there will be more praise than money at this town

The inn is very comfortable and the city splendid—the houses grand—the streets broad and spacious,

*The inn is very comfortable and the city splendid - the houses grand - the streets broad and spacious, beyond anything in London.*



*only there's nobody in 'em This is the grand St with 2 inhabitants*

beyond anything in London only there's nobody in 'em This is the grand St. with 2 inhabitants.

I think this is all your Papa's news His cough he hopes is a little better, and he writes this while waiting for Dr Brown<sup>1</sup> who is going to lionise him about the town—He did a little of his novel<sup>2</sup> this

<sup>1</sup> Dr John Brown, author of *Rab and his Friends*  
<sup>2</sup> *The Virginians*

morning and he kisses his 2 darling gals with all his heart, and he sends his best regards to Miss Trulock and hopes you had a pleasant evening at Mrs Bayne's. And so God bless you young women, prays

W M T

*W M Thackeray to his Daughters*

*November 21st [1856]*

Yesterday I dined at the Artillery Mess with Col Hamley—very agreeable Artillery officers from the Crimea—one a pompous good natured old fogey with dyed hair, who showed us a gold snuff box he had taken from a French General at Waterloo—another a very pleasant heavy Dragoon Colonel MacMahon, also Crimean—saw him at the Review a few days since roaring at the head of his men

Was to be off to Glasgow this morning & got as far as the station just in time to remember I had forgotten the lecture, came back and read the paper in peace & quiet—think I shall be very glad when the 22 December is over & I have done wagging my jaws for a while—shall have enough to live next year without touching a penny of the Good for Nothing money—so much the better for you girls

Am not in love with Miss Block any more, since Mrs. Brown told me she is here under a rubbing Doctor, and is rubbed every day for 2 hours with lard—of course she has a female rubber—but still .

Well this is Thursday now—I have been to Glasgow, lectured to 2000 people, come back again, taken a dose of dear delightful calomel and a dose this morning—for you see I am in a dreadful fright lest my attacks should come on, and go to Glasgow again tomorrow & lecture every night next week So you need none of you spare yourselves anything—not carriages horses fires comforts of any sort—when for 2 hours talking we can have 50£—Mind this.

I have been reading Walter Scott's Life all day

and how at 60 odd he sat down to pay off a debt of 130000£ with his pen What a courage! At Glasgow I went & took tea with Mrs Blackburn who is painting with wonderful skill and beauty now—and she showed me a new invention which I think will spare poor Eyre all the trouble with my plates And what more have I to say? Why that's all for the night I think Please G P give the girls any money they want I still think you might all take a fine day and X from Havre to Southampton, and so we might all dine in O. Square on Xmas day. I am answering letters every day about the lectures

*Friday morning Nov 22 1856* And now I am going to Glasgow It is a pretty drive and it would have been prettier if, etc etc not that I should have seen much of you, and you would have been a clog sometimes and no mistake. Last night we began the second series, very good audience considering. Afterwards I was obliged to go to supper—of ladies and gentlemen We had songs after supper, it was very odd and old fashioned and kind and huge tumblers were brought in, in wh every man made himself a glass of whiskey toddy Mine did me a great deal of good for I was tired after my day's work and dosing, and this morning I woke up as fresh as possible Have been spending it in writing lots of letters as usual—and now I send my benedictiod to my daughters and my humble duty to my parents and will go pay some visits So farewell my dears

W M T.

### *Journal 1856*

*June 8* As I am very sleepy I only want to say two words before I go to bed on the last day of my eighteenth year Goodbye farewell days!—you are dashing off much quicker than I expected, and I want to write down how happy this Paris winter has been June has come again, and Papa and the old life, and

another year of my life has gone by just as usual, except that I hope I really am a little older and wiser, though I haven't kept one of those resolutions I wrote down on my last birthday

I won't write any more to-night, what's the use with this badly cut pen?

*June 16th* Came home from Shere with Tishy and find my Minny has been ill Had a very pleasant exerciseful time there and three helps of beef for dinner.

*June 25th* Has been a very pleasant day at Sydenham Mr Morris invited us three to fruit, flowers and testimonials on a long gay table. The Palace in the moonlight with the bright stars twinkling through the panes was mysterious and jolly The gentlemen whooped foolishly and talked very loud, and the drive home in the open was delicious. Minny has been telling me how cross I am getting sometimes Twenty isn't a great deal but things seem to pierce through and through my brain somehow, to get inside my head and remain there jangling I wonder if it is having nothing to do all day pottering about with no particular object? It is no use writing novels they are so stupid, it's no use drawing little pictures, what's the good of them? Reading Algebra is no use, I can't understand it. It's the same with Astronomy and I mingle them all up together. I often think how pleasant it would be to have no brains, only good honest well defined bodily labour

I had one of my nightmares last night, sleeping and then presently waking up in a wretchedness impossible to describe All my nerves in a state of tension any fancy gripping hold of me and getting perfect dominion, *i.e.* that I can't turn in bed—that my heart is going to beat too quickly, tap, tap. It is only by determining to lie still with all my might and to go to sleep again, that this sort of state of annoyance with a tremendous jangling goes off.

*To Anny Thackeray from Mrs Dickens*

Tavistock House  
December 1st, 1856.

MY DEAR ANNIE,—Hoping that a long notice of our Christmas Theatricals may have the better chance of finding you disengaged at that Season, I send you the bill and hope we shall have the pleasure of seeing you, Mr Thackeray and Minnie on the night to which it refers I give my invitation this informal shape in order that I may assure you that it will give Mr Dickens great pleasure to have you among the audience at a new play with which he and all concerned have been taking great pains, also that I may ask you to favour me with as early an answer as is convenient, and that I may beg you to be here as near half past seven on the night as you can.

Yours very sincerely,  
CATHERINE DICKENS.

TAVISTOCK HOUSE THEATRE

*Under the Management of Mr Charles Dickens.*

ON TWELFTH NIGHT, TUESDAY, JANUARY 6TH, 1857,  
AT A QUARTER BEFORE 8 O'CLOCK WILL BE PRESENTED  
AN ENTIRELY NEW

ROMANTIC DRAMA IN THREE ACTS BY  
MR. WILKIE COLLINS

CALLED  
THE FROZEN DEEP

The Machinery and Properties by Mr Ireland of the  
Theatre Royal Adelphi.

The dresses by Messrs. Nathan of Tichborne Street,  
Haymarket

Perruquier—Mr Wilson of the Strand.

*W. M. Thackeray to his Daughters*

. There came along with this,<sup>1</sup> such a beautiful play bill in black and red ink—an entirely new Romantic Drama called the FROZEN DEEP with scenery by Telpin and Stanfield (Stanfd in large capitals) The prologue by Mr John Forster (that will be fine)—the characters by the old set, the ladies by Miss Helen, Miss Kate, Miss Hogarth, Miss Mary, Mrs Wills, Miss Martha to be followed by the farce in 2 acts called *Uncle John* God save the Queen, carriages may be ordered at half past eleven

It pains me to call you home,<sup>2</sup> but you can't live always away from your father The arrangements must be made now or later, another maid as I opine, and a lady as companion for Granny I wish she could be convinced that her illness is not much.

I have had fits of the fiercest depression—eh bien ? With blue pill and Quinine, please Heaven the disease is to be put an end to. And so goodbye my dears says Papa Mind my address is

*Monday 8,*

9 Bradford, Talbot Hotel

*Thursday 11 Liverpool Care of A Radcliffe Esq  
Northumberland Terrace, Everton.*

*Journal 1857*

*January 25th.* I can remember writing such an enormous quantity of melancholy these last two years in my journal, that it's quite a relief at last to say what fun we have been having We came home yesterday at half past five in the morning, from Minny's first ball at Mount Felix I wore a white silk gown and lilac flowers in my hair. Minnie had a green wreath and plenty of partners I had only thirteen Waltzing is Oh ! so delightful and I danced

<sup>1</sup> Mrs Dickens's invitation

<sup>2</sup> His children were staying with Mrs. Carmichael-Smyth.

with a cousin of Mr Synge's who pleased me absurdly by a compliment as to my dancing Minny looked very nice indeed just as a girl should look I am so glad that this has been such a good beginning for her It is much more wholesome to be undignified and happy than to know the world and be sullen.

I have come home thinking twenty-one is not such a tremendous age after all

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*W. M. Thackeray to his Daughters*

White Swan, Halifax

[1857]

Friday

My BELOVED ANGELS,—Although I am still at Halifax instead of going to Sheffield, yet I am greatly better, have just eaten 2 wings of a fowl for dinner, and wished the pore bird had 4, and have no doubt after the prodigious discipline I have undergone that I shall be able to get through the rest of the campaign without trouble Min's letter arrived from Leeds this morning—so that was as good as another letter from home. I have been reading Mahon with great comfort—am quite brisk and gay in my spirits though a trifle weak though for reasons wh my blushes forbid me to mention, I am not quite good for a public lecture tonight

Never mind—Tomorrow will begin again. We won't lose heart for a little check or two I think the Dr. I have had here is about the best of them all His name is Garlick, and I like him both in cookery and as a medical man God bless my women Write a famous account of me to Granny, and so good night says Papa

*W. M. Thackeray to his Daughters*

Royal Hotel, Sheffield

[1857].

Chewesday—17 of Feb.

This comes rather late for Valentine's Day It is copied from 6 mugs in my sitting room at the horrible



White Swan  
Halifax  
Friday.

although I am still at Halifax instead of going to Sheffield, yet I am greatly better now; just eaten 2 wings of a fowl for dinner and wished the poor bird had 4, and have no doubt after the prodigious discipline I have undergone that I shall be able to get through the rest of the campaign without trouble. This letter arrived from Leeds this morning, - so that was as good as another letter from home. I have been reading Malory with great comfort - am quite brisk and gay in my spirits, though a trifle weak, and thought for reasons w<sup>t</sup> my blushing forbids me to mention it, I was not quite good for a public lecture to night. A dear friend. Tomorrow will begin again. We won't lose heart for a little check or two. I think the D<sup>r</sup>



Royal Hotel Sheffield  
Chewesday - 17 Feb:  
This comes rather late for

Valentines day. It is copied  
from 6 mugs in my sitting



room at the horrible inn at  
Halifax. This is a joyful  
inn. I have the gayest parlour  
looking over these most cheerful streets - a clean  
tiny bed room - a snug sleep - a pleasant book to

Inn at Halifax This is a byootiful Inn I have the gayest parlour looking over three cheerful smoky streets—a clean snug bedroom—a snug sleep—a pleasant book to read—Colonel and Mrs. Forrest came to tea last night after the lecture that's y I didn't write to the girls I liked them both, she pretty and blonde, he very gentlemanlike The people for the most part didn't understand a word of the lecture Old Fogy President of Institution introduced me and insisted upon toddling into the room with me on his arm. What, is Mr Thackeray infirm? asks Mrs F of her husband It was Old Fogy who was infirm I had a very pleasant calm day at Fryston, and yesterday for dinner here ate a pheasant, one of a brace which old Mr Milnes insisted on sending to my daughters, though I told him I wasn't going home The last time I was at F. in the year 41, Mrs Milnes gave me a ribbon and a little étui, a something for my children—they were little trots of small size then—and she has been in Kingdom Come these 10 years I believe

I wish those horrible newspapers would leave my health out Some day the wolf will really come and no one will be frightened Keep off Wolf for a few months! I want to put my lambs in comfortable shelter.

I am in the 4 vol. of Mahon. It amuses me I have read Cockburn's *Memorials*, very pleasant too. It is delightful weather and the skeei is blyew through the smoke Poor old Brookfield was born here my ☺ feels very soft towards him Do you smell anything in this ink? It was thick, and I filled the bottle with brandy and soda-water I have nothing to tell my dawlings but that I am very well busy and cheerful. I go to Leeds lecture, and come back tonight to York. I like the quarters I am in So you may go on directing to this Royal Hotel till Saturday I mean you may send by Friday night's

post I am glad you liked the drive to Q, never mind the 2/6

Write to Granny and tell her how cheerfully your dear father writes and God bless my women says Papa

*W M. Thackeray to his Daughters*

*Sunday March 8 [1857]*

My LOAVES,—It was very comfortable having nothing to do , and a good dinner and a good sleep also refreshed your dear Papa The Scotch expedition is a failure as regards money, but pleasant enough otherwise—and this confounded election too will deprive me of ever so much more Never mind : we shall only be a little longer getting the 20,000

At Dundee I found and read *Pendennis* & thought it dreadfully stupid—Here I found and read 2 numbers of *Newcomes* and thought them—O for shame you conceited creature!—well—I cant help it If I think its bad I say so with just as much candour—and the desire of pease came into my mind—pease, repoge, and honest labour not this quackery wh I'm about now Let us NOT go into parliament let us retire and take that atelier and work and write honestly and humbly. The frontispiece of *Pendennis* is verily always going on in my mind

Here are yours of yesterday just come in I don't think there would be any good in going over just now to my dear old Mother—the coming away gives her more pain than the meeting gives her pleasure You see what you do when you marry —What slaves you become Well? and what immense happiness you enjoy I daresay with the right man These folks' pleasure has no doubt been very greatly increased during 40 years by their living together—the bottom of the Cup is rather bitter So may other dregs be.

That last was getting to be a very stupid sentence  
 Cause why? There is somebody sitting in the room  
 It is Professor Ferrier father of the pretty girl I  
 wrote you about and whom I dont like quite so much  
 on 2d thoughts—but those good people at Glasgow are  
 quite as nice and kind I had a quiet evening on  
 Friday with them, after a delightful ride through  
 lovely country from Dundee, by Perth, Stirling, to  
 Glasgow And tomorrow it is Glasgow again, &  
 Glasgow on Friday, and Dundee Wednesday—care of  
 Mr Chalmers Bookseller—but I don't care about  
 your writing unless there is something particular to  
 say, as I shall be 3 miles away from Dundee at the  
 house of Sir J Ogilvy wherever that may be.

And so with a benediction on my gals their Papa  
 puts a cigar into his mouth and goes out to take a  
 little walk in Church time Mind and go to Chesham  
 Place tomorrow night & say I got a letter from there  
 on Saturday only and give my best love to all there  
 including poor J. O. B.<sup>1</sup>

*W. M. Thackeray to his Daughters*

Keir-Dunblane  
*Monday Apr 26 [1857].*

MY DEAREST WOMEN,—These last few days I have  
 wished for you for the first time since I left home for  
 I've been staying in a most beautiful house and country  
 and have such a prospect before my eyes now as wd.  
 do yours good to look at

Mountains as handsome as our Swiss mountains  
 with a little snow on some of 'em, and beautiful rocks  
 and dark pines and larches bursting out into green,  
 and on the prettiest of the rocks in an immense great  
 plain covered with 1000 villages there's Stirling Castle  
 looking as grand as may be, and placed there for 'the  
 very purpose of making a landscape

Then the Park is full of birds singing and sheep and

<sup>1</sup> Mrs Brookfield

the most jolly little lambs—Minny would give 2d to see the little lambs and I would give 3d to see my young muttons And I went to a Scotch Church yesterday and heard 5 psalms sung, and a sermon, and an elder of the congregation ordained, and Stirling of Keir who is my host, says he hopes I'll bring you here but I've my doubts, and James says the place looks like a Paradise after Glasgow, and I'm going to Greenock a lecturing and shall be glad when I see old England again.

On Saturday is the Royal Academy dinner, and on Sunday I have a party at home so I shan't have the pleasure of snoring after dinner in your company till Monday evening

Tell the Cook that there will be 8 gentlemen to dinner on Sunday, and I would like a clear soup, fish, 2 entries, and sweets and Macaroni for second course—a nice dinner—and something plain for dessert afterwds Isn't this an amusing letter? It's one of 10 I'm writing—I cant afford to amuse you but I can always love my dearest women. God bless you.

W M. T

*Journal 1857*

*July 8th* Home at four o'clock this morning from Woolwich Ball Very pretty but somehow it wasn't quite up to my ideal. Should like to go to a ball three times a week.

*Tuesday night* Mr. Cardwell, M P is getting into bed I should think Papa came home beaten<sup>1</sup> but in capital spirits and we are very happy again now, but the first news that Papa wasn't elected wasn't at all agreeable.

Thackeray 1005  
Cardwell 1070

About five o'clock Amy and I thought we would

<sup>1</sup> Thackeray stood for Oxford City, in the Biographical Introduction to *The Virginians* my mother quotes from her journal, this description of the election

walk off and try and get some news of how the election was going in town We met Mr. Helps on the way who came part of the road with us, he said that though Papa denies it he really does speak very well I can't help being glad on the whole that he didn't get these grapes When we reached the news-shop we asked for the evening paper, only one *Express*, and a scornful young shopman dived into the sheet when Amy asked him the state of the poll and instantly informed us it wasn't decided We took the paper into the Park to read, and there was Cardwell calmly ahead with 857 votes and poor Thackeray coming after I gave a great jump of disgust and flung the paper away, and as we came home through the drizzling rain we felt dreadfully inclined to cry Grey had got another newspaper when we got home with even worse news This protracted agony was dreadful and gave me a sensation of toothache in the mind, it was the greatest relief to have it out at last in the shape of a telegram, and now Papa has come home so cheerful and well that it has left off being a sorrow at all only a little trial. He has been telling us of a fat auctioneer who would call him Thackeray, he says if the poll had been put off a single day more he would have been obliged to kick him He says he will never go canvassing again, it's too disgustingly humiliating "Are you Mr. Neat's friend? Master's h'out, but he said I was to say he would vote for yeou"

Papa himself is a Cardwellite he says, only of course he couldn't well say so—my politics are filial politics and so goodnight

We have been having a very delightful month at Brighton learning to ride and being really very happy That is what Papa and I were talking about just now, happiness I mean, and indeed when one comes to think of it apart from religion, life and happiness are utterly incomprehensible

. . . If one were to die tomorrow how dreadfully

idle and vain and selfish one's past life will have been I don't steal or lie or get into passions, it would be too much trouble, I live a lazy luxurious comfortable idle life without courage or energy I say to myself I cannot understand religion therefore I leave it alone and read novels on a Sunday because I do not think it wrong, while Brother Tompkins at the Oratory is starving and thrashing himself because he thinks it right

*August 21st, 1857* It is a very hot day and Papa has invited ever so many Americans to dinner, besides Punch The drawing room looks very brilliant from the square, but the party doesn't sound as if it was being very amusing

I think we have had quite as good fun as the distinguished company upstairs, picnicking in the dining room amongst undulating scenery of chairs, cushions and tables, and eating up some horrid tough mutton

We thought the drawing room got larger and larger at every fresh move when the table was pushed into the back drawing room we were enchanted, when the arm-chairs went rolling in we stood admiring, and when the dining room table from downstairs travelled up on the shoulders of Mr Gunter's men, we said it was exactly like the Waterloo Gallery and so it was

Mr Bayard Taylor is here, "der ein Hero ist." A gallant bearded man with a handsome face He is very like Francis I, so we think, and we like him even better Ah! America if your sons are all gallant gentlemen like this one, if your daughters simple ladies like his sisters I wonder—what profound remark shall I make now?

*W M Thackeray to Mrs Carmichael-Smyth*

[1858]

I must send my dear old Mother and G P. a line of Xmas greeting, and tell them how well and happy the young ones are whom I left a couple of hours ago at Walton, in the midst of such lavish splendours and magnificence as I have never seen the like of in the finest houses here—all wh splendours, Christmas trees loaded with presents, fountains of Champagne and Hock, drives in coaches and four & I don't know what more, are lavished upon 8 or nine young girls and 2 or 3 gentlemen—One of them was busy all day concocting the speech wh he is to let off in an hour or two at the City of London Tavern in behalf of the Commercial Travellers school Anny to whom I dictated the speech remembers all the points, and the very words deuce a one of wh I recall verbally I should not be sorry to fail, for then people wont ask me again and I shall be rid of a very severe tax wh. is laid on men in prominent positions.

We are to have more holiday making at the Pollocks, and I can't resist for I can't bear that the girls should lose any pleasure, and meanwhile how is No IV<sup>1</sup> to be got out? Well, other folks have their drawbacks and their encumbrances—let us bear ours without too much grumbling

Your heart would have melted over a little boy<sup>2</sup> of 2 last night trotting round the Xmas tree crying out "O Crissamy Tee Crissamy Tee!" He looked like a little cherub just peeping into heaven & he didn't like even to take away his own share of toys from the general splendour—O dear—I should like very much to stop at home alone for 3 days and get on with that No IV! It was kind of the Sturgis' to ask Amy and as much is made of her as of any one—and very well she looks too, and so does Miss Anny who has got

<sup>1</sup> *The Vicarians*

<sup>2</sup> Howard Sturgis

thinner & is a comfort to look at, especially to her father & to your son my dear old Mother

God bless both of you he says, and now let us rehearse that speech

*Journal 1859*

*March 3rd* Awoke very tired and drowsy and read Tales from Spenser's *Faery Queen*, and considered that I too might be a Knight to a certain degree and that I was certainly wasting my time in the Castle of Indolence at that very moment It was Miss Agnes Strickland who had suggested a new phase of existence to me the night before

Rotten Row with Amy in the afternoon. Somebody on a white pony came up to us. It was Arthur Prinsep looking like a little Knight out of Spenser with violets in his button hole "Where are you going to-night?" "Nowhere, I beg to say, though we have several invitations" Then he talked about Mrs. Senior and rode away Everything delightfully glittering and life-full, ladies horses, spring sunshine. In Kensington the white horse caught us up again. "I like your violets very much" said I, and of course they were instantly presented to me. "Do come to lunch" cries the youth But I shake my head "Do come on Sunday What a wonderful season this is," and off he rides Amy and I walk home along the roads and we moralize over violets.

*March 6th* Read Meteorology from 12 to 1 Went to dine at Mr Sterling's, sat next Mr. Reeve. Mrs Norton was there, wonderfully kind and stunningly handsome with a golden "salve" on her forehead

*March 8th.* Mrs Brookfield to dinner, Mr Harcourt Mr Massey Mr Moseley I talked to Mr Moseley, and Mr Harcourt said aggravating things about women as usual. It's absurd to be annoyed as it's only a joke but it's very riling O ye heavens!

look at him and then look at me! Why am I to be contemptible all my days long?—Why is he to be so much more worth in his own, in everybody else's estimation? Why has he got work and leisure and strength and height and a thousand more advantages which I can't get at, not if I try till I burst like the frog in the fable? Why am I ridiculous when I spar at him with foolish little thrusts, I'm sure my brains are as good as his? I could feel this last night while I was listening to his talk with Mr Brookfield.

*March 21st* To Mrs Carlyle's where we found Lady Stanley looking very jolly who told us how she had lived for two years on mutton and rice “Love to your Father,” says she, “Come along Maude,” and off they go Mrs Carlyle was speaking enthusiastically of *Adam Bede* She has written some of her enthusiasm off to George Eliot and had grateful messages in reply Mr Carlyle quite declines reading the book, and when Mrs Carlyle hoped it might be sent to her, he said, “What should George Eliot send it to you for?” “Why shouldn't he, as he sent me his first book?” says she “You are just like all weemen,” (Mr. Carlyle always calls them weemen). “You are always forming unreasonable expectations,” growls he, and at that moment ring at the bell and in comes the maid with a brown paper parcel containing the book!

*March 22nd* Felt miserable and sick of the world in general Picked up a kind cheery Papa at the Reform Club. To the Bishop of London's where I talked to Mrs Twistleton, I told her I had asked Mrs Carlyle who was her greatest friend and that Mrs Carlyle had said Mrs Twistleton, at which she looked delighted Mrs Clough was there too and after all my liking for her and correspondence she mistook Minny for me Dean of St Paul's<sup>1</sup> asked ·

<sup>1</sup> Dean Milman

"Do you know who the lady behind you is?" so I replied "Mrs Grote" "My dear Mrs Grote," he cried, "Heaven forbid! It's Miss Agnes Strickland in black velvet with a bead berthe," and then turned his courteous old back upon her Came home without Papa who went on to Lady Derby's

*Friday* In the Park saw Mrs Norton careering along between two young men One of them B Norton in an astounding hat shaped like a very hideous Etruscan vase I had a pink gown and blue shawl, and was ashamed of being recognised in such a garb, so we dodged about on the grass and let Mrs Norton go by

*Anny Thackeray to her cousin Emmy Irvine  
36, Onslow Square*

Minny says that if the Angel Gabriel came to fetch me I should say, "Just wait a minute till I have finished this note," and in the meantime with all this scribbling I have kept you waiting ever so many days

Papa gave us a letter to read this morning, it is from Edward Thackeray's colonel recommending him for a V.C Colonel Smith says he is one of the bravest of his Engineers, and after all, as Papa says, bravery is the best thing in the world and makes everyone more friendly and enthusiastic than cleverness, or wisdom, or learning, or rank or whatnot, and so it is no wonder if we all feel proud to have a V C come into the family.

We have got some people coming to dinner tomorrow, one Sir Edwin Landseer, who has sent us a little dog picture. Another is Dr Sandwith, who was locked up in Kars, and performed prodigies of valour, and is I believe, covered with Victoria Crosses

I dined the other day at the grandest dinner I ever went to, the Duke of Argyll's on Campden Hill, but the Duchess was so kind, that it wasn't near as alarming as I expected Archdeacon Sinclair was on the other side of me at dinner, and you are announced when you go in, by a Highlander in a kilt, who suddenly steps forward, bare-kneed strap shoes and all, and says, "Mr and Miss Tackey" in an imposing voice at the door

*Journal 1859*

*September* We went to Folkestone and very jolly it turned out to be, except that when we got out of the train we found we were at Dover! We had a pleasant little sitting-room on the ground floor Freshness, the Pier, the bathing-machines Breakfast in the public room, Hy the every day, and drives back at night under the stars Papa was in a bad way most of the time with the end of *The Virginians*, and came and went and left us perforce a good deal to our own devices

After six weeks we crossed over to Boulogne All night in the train to Tours was delightfully ghostly, swift, fresh and then came the solemn old city asleep Then the South luxuriant to begin with, then vine-clad and garlanded then arid, dreary, covered and muffle<sup>d</sup> with dust When we got to the shores of the Mediterranean we began to breathe again Then came Milan, where we saw the wounded French soldiers crawling in the sun, Magenta<sup>1</sup> with the bullet marks still on the lamp posts and houses, and Como where they are illuminating and where I began to be unwell Through the Via Mala next day to Chur, where we stopped at last and my illness declared itself

Then as soon as I was better to Paris, where we

Battle of Magenta, June 4, 1859

picked up Grannie and G P Twenty one days have gone since we reached home, during which the *Cornhill*<sup>1</sup> has been put together Papa delightfully well and in good spirits, two new members of the establishment Theo and Hetty<sup>2</sup>

*W M Thackeray to Mrs Carmichael-Smyth*

Chur Saturday 1 October [1859]

MY DEAR OLD GRANNY,—We have not been in Paradise the last week, but please God, Anny's difficulties are nearly over There is good however out of all these mishaps, Min has been a famous nurse for her sister and has borne her hard times very well and if she repents of having had her own way, somewhat in opposition to her Papa's, I shall not be sorry for the circumstance

We could not have had a prettier prison than this dear little old town nor I am sure a more patient prisoner If I could but have had pluck enough to do some work, I might have turned the imprisonment to some account, but I tried and hadn't the heart that's the truth—though I recollect having to work when poor Nan had the same complaint as a baby twenty years ago, and it was necessary to find a guinea for the Doctor If I can work for 3 years now, I shall have put back my patrimony and a little over—after 30 years of ups and downs I made a calculation the other day of receipts in the last 20 years and can only sum up about 32000£ of moneys actually received, for which I have values and disbursement of 13000£ so that I haven't spent at the rate of more than 1000£ a year for 20 years The profits of the lectures figure as the greatest of the receipts 9500£—*Virginians* 6—*Vanity Fair* only 2

<sup>1</sup> The first number of the *Cornhill Magazine* was published January 1, 1860, with Thackeray as editor

<sup>2</sup> A pair of ponies

3 years more, please the Fates, and the girls will then have the 8 or 10000 a piece that I want for them and we mustn't say a word against filthy lucre, for I see the use and comfort of it every day more and more. What a blessing not to mind about bills!<sup>1</sup> The expenses of this journey for the first 18 days were prodigious, and who cares? I, for my part, should have liked no journey at all, or no farther than Homburg and Baden, but the young folks willed otherwise, or seemed to will—and I like them to have their holyday. All along the road they have worked the prices up to be pretty like England—the inn at Milan where they charged us 12 francs for rooms 8 years ago, they make you pay 25 now, and so on and so on—I wonder what your resolves have come to by this time, and whether you stay on in England, or have gone back to Paris, or will try Bath or Brighton? I have been living at Bath for the last ten days in Miss Austen's novels which have helped me to carry through a deal of dreary time—they and the *Times* newspaper which the landlord of this out of the way Inn luckily takes in for the English who don't come. How dismal I should have been without the *Times* newspaper! Well, I have been dismal enough with it but my dear Nan is better please God, and her Papa's spirits rise accordingly. Now let us go and get some money from the Banker's, and tomorrow D V let us be on our way home to work and printer's devils. I have dreamed constantly that the number wasn't ready, and here was the end of the month it shows how the care weighs upon one but Law bless us, who hasn't cares at 50 of some shape or other? As I think about the poor Corkranks and their cares, I am ashamed of my own good fortune. Here's my paper full Goodbye my dear G P and my dear old Mother.

W. M. T.

<sup>1</sup> This paragraph was quoted by my mother in her Biographical Introduction to *Philip*.

## VI

1860-1863

It was in the *Cornhill Magazine* of May 1860, that my mother's first article was published. How it came to be written is told in the following letter to George M. Smith, in answer to his question, "At what age did you begin to write?"

1900

"I feel much flattered you should ask such a question. I had written several novels and a tragedy by the age of fifteen, but then my father forbade me to waste my time any more scribbling, and desired me to read *other* people's books.

I never wrote any more except one short fairy tale, until one day my father said he had got a very nice subject for me, and that he thought I might now begin to write again.

That was *Little Scholars* which he christened for me and of which he corrected the stops and the spelling, and which you published to my still pride and rapture."

George Smith in his own *Reminiscences* writes of the essay and says, "Thackeray sent it to me with a letter containing the following passage. 'And in the meantime comes a contribution called "Little Scholars," which I send you, and which moistened my paternal spectacles. It is the article I talked of sending to *Blackwood*, but why should *Cornhill* lose such a sweet paper because it was my dear girl who wrote it? Papas, however, are bad judges—you decide whether we shall have it or not!'"

*W. M Thackeray to Mrs Carmichael-Smyth*Palace Green, Kensington, W  
July 5 [1862]

My dearest old Mother gets the budget from the girls and the history of our doings On Thursday at 6<sup>15</sup> p m after working all day I wrote *Finis* to *Philip* rather a lame ending Yesterday I spent all day in great delectation and rest of mind making a very bad drawing Young Walker who is 20 does twice as well and at 20 you know we all thought I was a genius at drawing O the mistakes people make about themselves! Then at 5 we drive down in our pretty new carriage to the Aumale Fête at Twickenham, where I daresay the Dukes and Duchesses would have admired my new lavender gloves (price 2/s) very much—only I forgot 'em and left them in my great coat pocket, never mind it was a beautiful fête and I am all the better this morning, because I could only get a crust to eat and a scrap of galantine—and did the girls tell you how I had no dinner the day before having to take them to the *Barbiere* (a new opera by Mr Rossini)—and where I had a most refreshing sleep in the back of the box And this is our life and now there is a little lull after a constant care and occupation No by the way, not yet, quite Mr Smith says "Do, pray write a Roundabout paper" and that, you see, is churning in my brain whilst I am writing off a scrap to my dear old Mother Mesdemoiselles, were not ready for prayers, so I was parson, and I can tell you one person of the congregation was very thankful for our preservation and all the blessings of this life which have fallen to us. Think of the beginning of the story of the Little Sister in the Shabby genteel story twenty years ago, and the wife ill and the Publisher refusing me 15*£* who owes me £13 10 and the *Times*, to which I apply for a little more than 5

guineas for a week's work, refusing to give me more—and all that money difficulty ended God be praised and an old gentleman sitting in his own house like the hero at the end of a story The actual increase of health and comfort since we got into the Palazzo is quite curious I am certainly much better in body—I think the novel-writing vein is used up though and you may be sure some kind critics will say as much for me before long

Anny's style is admirable and Smith and Elder are in raptures about it But she is very modest and I am mistrustful too I am sure I shan't love her a bit better for being successful

Here comes Mr Langley<sup>1</sup> with the proofs which must be read and there is a good morning's work over them And then that Roundabout Paper—a plague on it—But it will be 60 or 70£

"Mr Langley, where is the Cicero? in 2 volumes quarto I want a quotation out of it?" Mr Langley maulders about the room helplessly He won't find it: I shall and he will be persuaded that he found it, and that I cannot possibly get on without him I wonder shall we make out the Petersburg journey? I have a fancy for it, because it will pay for itself in a couple of papers that will be as easy to write as letters and won't wear and tear the brains Then we must do some more work I think the story which I began 20 years ago and then, and then—

Did you read about poor Buckle when he got the fever at Damascus crying out, "O my book, my book!" I don't care enough about mine to be disquieted, when that day comes Shall I live to do the big history? Who knows? But I think I shall like to work on it if the time is left me God bless you, dear old Mother, I don't write to you by post, but I am writing through the printer all day long and the song is always Ego, Ego, God bless us all—and now

<sup>1</sup> Thackeray's amanuensis

come Mr Langley and let us go through those proofs  
and all the blunders<sup>1</sup>

W M T

*Little Scholars* was followed two years later (1862) by a novel, *The Story of Elizabeth*, which came out as a serial in the *Cornhill Magazine*. In April of the following year it appeared in book form with illustrations by Frederick Walker. The success of *Elizabeth* was immediate, and although published anonymously, the book was at once recognised as a work of originality and genius. When the authorship was made known my mother's reputation as a writer was assured.

Rhoda Broughton has written of the impression the novel made upon her "Vividly comes back to me the memory of my astonished delight when *The Story of Elizabeth* burst in its wonderful novelty and spring-like quality on my consciousness, written, as I was told, by a girl hardly older than myself!"

*Anne Thackeray to George M Smith*

Palace Green

[August 1863]

DEAR MR SMITH,—Thank you for your note and for letting me see *Elizabeth* in her beautiful new clothes<sup>2</sup>. I am quite proud of such a type and take it as a personal compliment.

I am also very much pleased because two different heroes have asked me confidentially if I was not thinking of their affairs when I wrote the story!

Yours sincerely,

ANNE THACKERAY

*Journal 1863*

1<sup>st</sup> b 9<sup>th</sup> *Elizabeth* continues to be a success. It's quite a little fortune and more that is coming to

<sup>1</sup> Passages from this letter were quoted by my mother in her *Biographical Introduction to Philip*.

<sup>2</sup> A review of *The Story of Elizabeth* had just been published by Messrs Smith and Elder.

me My good fortune, I don't know why, makes me feel ashamed

. . . We have been to Mentmore<sup>1</sup> for a week and were immensely amused and well treated We made some new friends We lived upon damask and pâté de foie gras Cavendishes, Harding Russell, Fitz-James Stephen, Miss Probyn, Curries, Lady Augusta Bruce, every one of them pleasant to know

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To Rhoda Broughton we owe another recollection of the book She tells of Thackeray's delight in his daughter's success, and writes "Do you remember Mrs Kemble telling Henry James of a luncheon party, where she met Thackeray and your mother? It was just after the publication of *Elizabeth*, and Mrs Kemble said to Thackeray that people were beginning to say that Anny stood next to him as a writer, and he replied with emotion: 'Yes, it tears my guts out!'"

### *Journal*

I recollect how Papa took up my diary for 1864 and said. "Next year begins with a Friday" And I little thinking replied "Papa, I assure you Friday is our lucky day Indeed it will be a happy year"

I remember now, only I can't bear to think of it, that all last year he was never well, he said "Life at this purchase is not worth having" He said "If it were not for you children, I should be quite ready to go"

One day not long ago, I came into the dining room and he was sitting looking at the fire. I do not remember ever to have seen him looking like that before and he said, "I have been thinking in fact, that it will be

<sup>1</sup> A contemporary of my mother's wrote in September 1918. "It was at Folkestone in 1861 that I saw so much of the Thackerays Anny Thackeray was then writing *The Story of Elizabeth* and was very splendid in every way She also stayed at Men more when I was there, but she was always a personage and I was a mere girl"

a very dismal life for you when I am gone" He said,  
"If I live, I hope I have ten years more work in me  
It is absurd to expect a man to give up his work at  
50" He said too "When I drop, there is to be no  
life written of me, *mind this* and consider it as my last  
testament and desire"

Today I do not remember many things he has  
said I can see him passing his hand through his  
hair, laughing, pouring out his tea from his little  
silver teapot I can see him looking at his face in  
the glass and saying "I am sure I look well enough,  
don't I?"

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Thackeray died suddenly on the morning of  
Christmas Eve, 1863

## VII

1864-1867

### *Journal 1864 and Notes on Family History*

This sad year began at Freshwater. It was bitter weather. Minny and I were at Mrs Cameron's cottage. She was goodness in person. Alfred Tennyson used to come and see us in his cloak. Hardinge Cameron would ask us to go for walks and try to interest Minny in painting.

From Freshwater we went to the Ritches at Henbury. Grannie came and joined us there. Terrible religious discussions, Grannie's religious views were always very intense and she took our different habits of thought passionately to heart. It used to make us miserable to make her so unhappy. Minny would be made downright ill and I used to get half distracted.

At last Grannie went away to London looking very ill (I can still see her as she looked at Henbury, a noble and magnificent figure, like one of Michael Angelo's sibyls, only with a far gentler and more beautiful expression)<sup>1</sup>

*February 22* Had a good cry under a tree among the crows. For a walk with Minny along the road, all the trees looked like people we knew. Birds circling over the fields

*March 2.* From Henbury we went back to Freshwater and then to Warnford, to Mrs. Sartoris. Warnford was a great house in a great park, a wide river ran

<sup>1</sup> One of a few notes added by A. I. R. to her journal in 1895.

across the meadows with driftwood, bare ash trees and willows everywhere

The drawing-room was a lofty room, lights burning, yellow curtains, tall cabinets, a high chimney piece and the fire smouldering on the hearth Mrs Sartoris singing Gordigiani's passionate complaint

Everything harmonious and bright, except that my heart ached and ached Minny sat leaning her head against the chimney Grief amidst carving and splendours, it puts me in mind of Mendelssohn's *Wedding March*

Mrs Sartoris in her own room, sitting at an open window with a stone terrace China and tapestry on the walls within, without the old court The rooks fly round and round, there are green hills beyond the fields, one seems stifled and closed in on every side, and I feel as if some day the hills will come rolling down and close in and overwhelm the house.

There is a fountain on the terrace, and brick steps wet with rain lead down to the lawn The rooks are flying in the air ever so high I hate them One little bird trilling freshly in the rain He makes me feel more idle and more sad Let's improve our minds and read something Saw advertisement of the sale at home, as they all sat reading in the lamp-lit room

We have been making up our minds to go. A sweet lovely day, walked out with May<sup>1</sup> As we were walking on the terrace, with the fields and the meadows all bathed in evening light, suddenly looking up we saw the little new moon in the sky

May asked for a bit of silver to turn in her pocket. Mrs Sartoris replied, "Certainly, child, if you ask her for anything" I said, "There seems nothing left to ask for any more" Mrs Sartoris answered, "Ask for peace"

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Evans-Gordon

In April Minny and I took a cottage at Putney while everything was being settled, copyrights, houses, lawyers' business Mr. and Mrs. Prescott were at Clarence House close by They had a lovely old garden and a kind big house filled with boys, girls, sick and sorry people, and we went there constantly

I am sitting under the trees, in our little garden, a big bumble bee buzzing and a lovely thrrostle singing Minny said, "Anny, while we are bodies, it is no use pretending we are spirits"

Mr George Smith wrote to us that Papa's bust was to be put up in Westminster Abbey

In August we were at Arromanches in Normandy. On St Michael's Day, September 29th, Minny and I came from Normandy to our little new house in Onslow Gardens It wasn't nearly so sad as we feared. It was like coming home again.

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*To Mrs. Fanshawe*

16, Onslow Gardens [1864]

The first word to you from this new life We are very peaceful we two together, a little lonely as you may think It is like living at an Inn, and does not feel as if it were home exactly, but when we look at Papa's picture upon the wall, and sit at his table, and see things which were his, then it becomes a strange bit of wreck saved out of the past

We have been here a month, and Grannie is coming this week, and that will take away a little of the loneliness

. . . I have a study I like very much, though other people think it gloomy, and we have a pretty square grey-walled drawing-room with chintz and china. We find the dining-room a hole, but the bed-

rooms are airy, and there's a bath and everything we want

We have had to buy one or two things for the house, among them a dining-room table I was amused to go off with Fanny into the city to find one It's a little bit of a thing but round, and strangely enough we happened upon a shop where Papa used to go, and where we found our own old table from Onslow Square, but it would have been too big

The other day we were at Cambridge and found Papa's name written in the old college books, among many more of the old familiar names It was like getting nearer to Papa to see his youth with our own eyes We passed his rooms without knowing them A kind sick clergyman who was there, remembered him in Mr FitzGerald's room quite well, and again drawing pictures at a water party

It is a gusty grey Sunday, out of window there is a green square and then unfinished houses and scaffolding This house was Hobson's choice

### *Journal 1864*

*November 10* Grannie suddenly to our great pleasure came back to stay She liked the house and settled down with us

Mrs Carlyle used to come and fetch me for drives all this winter

*November 26.* I went for a little walk with Grannie, she said she had changed her mind about many things, especially about religious things, and that she could now sympathize far more than she had once done, with what my father used to think and say.

*December 17* Our last peaceful evening together. Grannie sat in her corner by the fire She began talking of the past, of her life in India, and of Papa's father coming to see her on his white horse. Then



MISS CARMICHAEL SMYTH  
From a drawing by Anny Thaelerav



she got up saying she must go to her rest, and she kissed us and blessed us. A moment after she left the room, Fanny came running to call us—she had passed away

*Journal 1865*

Wrote and worked very hard at *The Village on the Cliff* which I was beginning to write at this time

George Eliot sent me word she liked my *Clarence* article

Early in the year to Waltham Cross to stay at the Trollopes It was a sweet old prim chill house wrapped in snow.

The Merivales were staying there too I remember so well saying to Rose Merivale how terrible this pain of parting was, and would it ever cease? She said, "Life is over so quickly, so very quickly," and now I feel how true that is

I can also remember in the bitter cold dark morning hearing Mr Trollope called at four o'clock. He told me he gave his man half a crown every time he (Mr Trollope) didn't get up! "The labourer is worthy of his hire," said Mr Trollope in his deep cheerful lispy voice

June 10th. To the National Gallery with Mr. Millais Met Sir Charles Eastlake there Millais shook his fist at the Raphael Madonna.

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*To Walter Senior*

Freshwater

[Easter 1865]

We send you our love and hope you are both hungry and sleepy, and we do wish you were here. It is the funniest place in the world. Last night Mrs Cameron invited us to tea to meet Mr. Jowett and his four young men. We went and found them looking at photographs in a bedroom, rather shy

apparently, with Charlie Cameron's little combs and brushes all lying about We then went on to the Prinseps' next door, the four young men each carrying a candle, and Mrs Cameron's three maids in little knitted waistcoats carrying a huge box of photographs There we all sat round a table and looked at the pictures, while the young men each had a tumbler of brandy and water

We have a nice little drawing-room opening on a garden, and a nice little dining-room opening on a garden too We have shocking bad dinners and are obliged to have eggs and bacon to make up for almost every meal

. Everybody is either a genius, or a poet, or a painter or peculiar in some way, poor Miss Stephen says is there *nobody* common-place? We drove in to meet her the day before yesterday, and found three cousins with whom she had come They are at the Hotel, but rather bored and bewildered . . .

Mrs Cameron sits up till two o'clock in the morning over her soaking photographs, Jowett's lamp also burns from a casement, and the four young men are intently studying at another. I have not quite begun my holiday, for I had promised to finish two little articles for Mr Smith, but it is very different writing with a pencil on a down top, with the sea and a lark twiddling most beautifully overhead, to a two-pair front in London

We are going on all sorts of little expeditions to castles in the air, which are such very small ones that perhaps they won't turn into smoke

I cannot tell you how much we enjoy it all, of a morning the sun comes blazing so cheerfully, and the sea sparkles, and there is a far-away hill all green, and a cottage which takes away one's breath it looks so pretty in the morning mists Then come eggs and bacon Then we go to the down top Then we lunch off eggs and bacon. Then we have tea and

look out of window, then we pay little visits, then we dine off eggs and bacon, and of an evening Minny and Emmy robed in picturesque Indian shawls, sit by the fire, and Miss Stephen and I stroll about in the moon-light

To-night we are going to tea at the Tennysons to meet these dreadful young men again They give whoops and make us jump, and have each been presented with two photographs by Mrs Cameron, besides the tumblers of brandy and water The only other young man here is our cousin, who is a misogynist, and when he sees us coming he rushes away across a field, or if we call he leaves the room. . . .

Mr Prinsep wears a long veil and a high coned hat and quantities of coats Minny goes and reads Froude to him

. . . We have had two misadventures since we came The first, that we tried to walk from Yarmouth and lost our way, the second, that being rested next morning, we thought we would change the furniture in the room, and Minny carried a coal scuttle into the garden by way of clearing the coast, and at that moment, just as she was flourishing it round, Jowett and his four young men went by, and I believe that is why they yell at us when they see us coming Goodbye dear Walter, give them all our love and get well soon

*To George M. Smith*

Freshwater

[Easter 1865].

It is so heavenly lilac down here. There are nothing but poets and painters everywhere, and it is all gold and delicious up over the downs.

Do you think you could let me have a day or two more to finish my review for the *Cornhill Magazine*? Never mind if it is not convenient, perhaps Mr.

Enoch would send me word. I refuse to receive any more letters from you

Thank you for the proofs I am quite sure about Mrs Cameron's photographs. She paddles in cold water till two o'clock every morning Jowett is our next door neighbour Miss Stephen is staying with us Mr Allingham drops in to tea

. . . Mrs Cameron says, "Why does not Mrs. Smith come to be *photographed*? I hear she is *Beautiful* Bid her come, and she shall be made *Immortal*"

*To J. E. Millais*

Freshwater  
[1865]

. . I thought of you one day last week when we took a walk with Tennyson and came to some cliffs with a sweep of sand and the sea, and I almost expected to see poor Boadicea up on the cliff, with her passionate eyes<sup>1</sup> I heard Mr. Watts and Mr Prinsep looking for her somewhere else, but I am sure mine was on the cliff

Mr Watts has been painting Hallam and Lionel Tennyson We hear him when we wake, playing his fiddle in the early morning. They are all so kind to us that we do not know how to be grateful enough We have had all sorts of stray folks, Jowett and the Dean of Christ Church, and cousins without number.

It has been very pleasant and sunshiny, and we feel as if we should like to live on here in lodgings all the rest of our lives.

Last night "King Alfred" read out *Maud* It was like harmonious thunder and lightning

<sup>1</sup> Millais' picture "The Romans leaving Britain."

*Journal 1866*

*January Writing The Village on the Cliff*

To the House of Commons to hear Gladstone's great speech on redistribution of seats We stood in a cellar under the floor of the House and all I could see were the two soles of Gladstone's feet above my head, while I heard his wonderful voice coming down like a flood through the ventilator

*June 9th Picnic for my birthday very great success Mrs. Sartoris, Leighton, Val Prinsep, Julia Jackson, Leslie Stephen, Herman Merivale, etc., etc Luncheon at the Inn, tea under great trees, carts to the station, Mrs Sartoris singing*

*September To Caen for my book, to see a Normandy farm*

*October Back to London Leslie Stephen came and asked Minny to marry him. I was finishing The Village on the Cliff when she came up to tell me*

Two days after Minny's engagement, Tennyson came and I asked him to help me with the last paragraph of my book *The Village on the Cliff* I was overwrought, and I could see the characters of my story walking in the air very much smaller than life, like a bright-coloured magic lantern I have heard of this odd impression from others since then.

"When I was writing *The Village on the Cliff*, I was very nervous about it, and quite at an end of my ideas and resources, when one day came the first proofs of the lovely drawings, by Frederick Walker. They were so completely everything that I had ever hoped or imagined, that the sight of them gave me a fresh start, and I have always thought that he wrote the book not I, for the figures were to me almost miraculous realisations of what I tried to imagine the people might become. As a curious instance of a sort of brain wave, I had a nightmare one night, and

saw the figure of Reine, very bright, coming *down* upon me, and when the little letter piece came next month there was the identical figure I had dreamed of, with a basket, descending, no longer a nervous terror, but a delightful reality. I have always thought M le Maire playing the cornet was the keystone of the little story. My sister and I walked through a fog one evening to the studio, and he showed it to us on the block.

. . . The day before my sister married, he [Walker] came to see us, and said he should like to give her a drawing for a wedding present, and at her request, then and there he sat down and made a most charming delicate little pencil sketch of our little adopted niece, a child then—now a woman and married and to whose husband I have given the little picture.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Written by my mother for the *Life of Frederick Walker*, my thanks are due to Macmillan and Co for permission to print these passages

## VIII

1867-1875

"My mother writes in her journal "On the 18th. of June 1867 Leslie and Minny were married"

After the marriage Minny and her husband returned to Onslow Gardens Leslie Stephen and his wife and sister-in-law shared the same home until Minny's death in 1875

At the time of her engagement Minny had written to Mrs Fanshawe, "I hope never to be separated from Anny, except perhaps during my wedding tour I am sure she will have no reason to regret this change in our lives"

The following description of Minny written by her sister-in-law Caroline Stephen gives a vivid picture "She had a singular and indescribable social charm—a humourous wayward and changeful grace, which captivated not only for the moment but for life She was, beyond any one I have known, quaintly picturesque, tender and true She could never have been put into intellectual harness, but there was a rare sureness and delicacy in her critical intuitions, whether as to personal or literary qualities. Her own pen, though sparingly used, had a felicity worthy of her parentage, but what comes back most vividly in one's memory of her, is the half playful motherliness of her household ways, which was both amusing and pathetic in the youngest and most fragile of the little family party."

*To George M. Smith*16, Onslow Gardens  
[July 1867]

What a delightful and astounding surprise to come home, and find your note and the third Edition<sup>1</sup> Thank you, and I believe it is somehow your doing!

I have had such a pleasant trip, and such happy letters from my bride and bridegroom who are scrambling about, Minny on and Leslie walking beside the mule, which has to have steps cut for it as if it were a member of the Alpine Club

Give my best love to dear Mrs Smith, tell her the Paris Exhibition is charming, and the fashions hideous.

*To George M. Smith*

(On returning some borrowed stamps)

16, Onslow Gardens  
[1867]

From the Lady High Executioner —

Six dozen heads  
To clear the score,  
To come again  
I'd borrow more

*Journal 1868*

*January 2.* To stay with Mrs Prescott at Clarence The ghost of one of the old days—wind—snow, Leslie walked over to see me Mrs Prescott playing Marcello in the twilight, and the paralytic man beating time Colonel Hamley standing by the fireplace, “I never quite understand Kinglake It is in fact impossible to understand anybody—oneself least of all I believe other people know one a great deal better

<sup>1</sup> *The Village on the Cliff*. First Edition, February, 1867  
Second Edition, March Third Edition, July.

than one knows oneself I try to write a diary but it all seems sham"

This year my book *Five Old Friends* published

*To George M. Smith*

Warsash  
[1869]

Thank you so much, for much too much, for such a stupid little sketch It ought to have been finished in one number I see it doesn't do to write about things one likes very much, for one has such a pleasant notion of them in one's mind that one proses on and on I wish Miss Vanborough<sup>1</sup> would get on—I shall take her to Rome with me It is odd and sad to go back to one's heroine of fifteen years ago. And after this I shall take to writing memoirs

I am here till the 10th, there are people building the house all round us, while we sit still in the middle of the room I seem to have newly discovered that Mrs Sartoris is *extraordinarily* clever, if she had been a man instead of a woman I don't know what she would not have done. She has been reading such a lovely novel of George Sand's to me O if one could but write like that!

We take a walk among golden leaved trees, we dine, we wander through the ladders back to the half lighted drawing-room It is very even, rather a grandiose sort of life, with books and singing instead of people and bustle No towns, no sound, Mr. Sartoris is away haranguing his constituents

I am very much excited about this little dream of Mrs Tennyson's and mine, of a sort of living club for single women. I think it would cheer up some of the forlorn ones very much to have nice little apartments and a cook's shop on the ground floor<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The heroine of *Old Kensington*.

<sup>2</sup> My mother always took a great interest in philanthropic schemes all through her life she did much work in poor districts and schools

In April 1869 my mother travelled to Rome with Lady de Rothschild and her daughters, to stay with the Storys

*To her Sister*

Palazzo Barberini

Rome

[April 1869]

It's a great deal bigger, grander, *Romer* than we remember it even Every doorway and window and arch is noble, and seems glad to see me, and to say how is Minny?

I came all night from Florence I don't know why exactly, but it seemed convenient There was a grubby old priest, and a little French woman in the carriage, with whom I made friends All the big cities rolled past, Perugia, and paintings and academies and ever so many more, and at last in the morning the priest said "There is St Peter's," and there it was The Storys didn't expect me exactly, and the little French lady begged me to come with her, and to leave my luggage to her servant She was a very vulgar kind little lady, and when I wanted to pay for the carriage, said, "Ce n'est pas gentil," but we all opened our eyes when we stopped at a palace [Barberini] a great deal grander than Windsor Castle, with sun rippling all down the marble steps

The Storys were almost kinder and gladder to see me than I can tell you. I had breakfast directly, the instant I arrived, in the boys' schoolroom, with the sun in it

Then I had my bath, delicious spranking water, and now I have looked out of window and seen Rome and a Dominican

. . . There was a brilliant little assemblage last night. I wore my white poplin How I do wish my hair grew in thick natural plaits and scrolls alternated with elegant rows of curls, like the Italian and American ladies!

We have been to St John Lateran—the monks in white, the grand ladies followed by footmen, the people confessing, the violet priests chanting At one of the high altars sits a cardinal administering absolution for the most terrible crimes that can only be forgiven at Easter and Christmas, and people sit round in a row to watch the expression of the criminals' faces I took the spectators for the criminals, and was rather surprised to see quite young ladies in fashionable bonnets among them

It's bitter, bitter cold to-day, and yet last night the sun set in such a gorgeous stream that it looked like weeks and years of fine weather I had forgotten the sunsets We were down in the Corso when it began and all the crowds of people were lighted up with a curious lurid light like the night of the great fire at Covent Garden Then we drove up on the Pincio and saw fiery seas and bays

There go the guns and bells. I don't know what for I must go out on the balcony to see

*To her Sister*

Palazzo Barberini

Rome  
[1869]

Yesterday was like one of the days one remembers, but the thing is one *doesn't* remember it!

I meant to get up early to write to you, but I didn't wake till I don't know what o'clock, and there are no noises in these Italian palaces.

When I was dressed, I breakfasted with Mr Story who railed at philanthropy and observances, and said that as for a sense of duty, it was only an imaginary thing, and duty meant doing as one really liked best. I never know what to think—when I see people like him and Leslie, who speak the truth and work hard and keep faith to their neighbours, talking in this sort of way. . .

The room I inhabit opens straight into the old nursery where the Storys have taken to live of late A canary hangs in the window—just think what a view it has—and there is a wood fire and a little square table laid in a corner of the room, where Mr Story breakfasts The other breakfasts travel about on little trays, and I sometimes take one little breakfast at eight, and then appear again quite natural at ten-thirty and take another with Mr Story Can you fancy him and me talking the above horrible talk, and the canary shrilling, and Stephano and old Rosa pottering about with tea-pots and bread and butter?

Yesterday morning Sir William Alexander and I went to see the "Cenci" together, and like all the pictures which I didn't want to see, I have found the poor little thing quite different from what I expected. She looks at one with an appealing face (not the least like the pictures who only smirk at one in nightcaps) It's just a tremulous sort of look, a little bit like you darling, it's *horridly* touching, and Sir William and I turned away quite overcome with emotion. No, but *really* I think you would have felt quite fond and sorry for her too.

I find one of the odd effects of Rome is to set one longing, I don't know for what exactly The beautiful things and sights excite one, and it is not warm enough to soothe one at the same time. I keep wondering where all the great men and women can be gone to, and whether the Huxleys and Spencers are really the statues and conquerors of these days? In the Capitol we came into a sunshiny marble room with two rows of busts They were Aristides and Hippocrates and Solon and I don't know who. They looked exactly like Dr Hunt and Huxley and Mr. Spottiswoode

Last night there was another party, ever so many people came. Little old Sir William Alexander and I settled to go again and see pictures, and I met one

charming lady, a sister of Mrs Pells, who quite won my heart. Also the beautiful Miss Wadsworth, whom I don't admire at all, and Hatty Hosmer quite grey and hung round with sequins. But I want painted people and marble hearts just now, and don't seem to care to devote myself to all these grandly dressed strangers. I find myself wishing that the peerage of the United Kingdom could be swept away at one swoop. Lords are like meteors here in Rome, and still more Dowager ladies and their daughters. Lord Taunton came to luncheon yesterday. He's charming. Mrs Dexter came to meet him. She had had him to dinner in America thirty-five years before, a dinner seems so much more after thirty-five years, doesn't it?

After luncheon what Mrs Story calls "Julia's Trump Card," Lady Dunmore, called. She called, and called, and called, for such a long time, that I thought all the bright afternoon would be over, but it wasn't, and we went and fetched Mr Story at his studio, and took a drive, and then went to see Odo Russell and Lady Emily in blue, on a sofa with a newborn infant. Lady Emily is like the twins, and Odo Russell is diplomatic in large trousers, and little pointed toes.

He was telling us all about the old palace in which he lives, and how whenever a member of the family dies, it is a tradition that all the curtains, and hangings and pictures and furniture should be swept away into vast store-rooms upstairs, where the things moulder and moulder, tapestries and wonderful drawings and stamped leathers. It's like the parable to hear of these people piling up and piling up. They never go and see their treasures, and only laughed at Mr. Russell for wanting to explore.

Did I tell you of my delightful expedition? I went off early and joined the Wards and Normans at the Vatican. The statues were all smiling and nodding

in those beautiful halls full of sunshine It is like scales fallen from my eyes Do you remember how we did not care for them? Now quite naturally as I look, I love It isn't sham make up feeling, it's as if a new delightful sense came to me, which I didn't know I possessed. And I am sure you would feel just the same

The statues stand alive, serene, with noble heads bent, and shining torsos, they drag a trail of glory with them, and I think I have been to Olympus and feasted with Gods

Except the statues, all the things I tell you aren't the things I specially like, which are just the odds and ends which I forget again as I drive by There was the King of Naples yesterday, there was an onion shop—there was a little marble seat in the corner of a palace where we sat—a dab of blue through a door—and a girl whirling her arm.

. . . Edie and I went into San Lorenzo (which is in Browning's poem) The sun was streaming in, there were gilt trestles and a cloth where a coffin had been all night, and candles and flowers and two old men pottering about clearing away, and a blear-eyed young man whose business it was to sleep by the corpses Coming into the church from the rolling street, all chattering and twinkling and flowering, it seemed so strange and melancholy

The Storys say nobody ever wrote such good letters as you and Leslie He has, just think, dedicated a poem to me in the Graffite<sup>1</sup> and said he nearly dedicated an Alpine one to Leslie but thought he would think it absurd

*To Mrs. Tennyson*

South Cottage  
Kingston  
[1870]

We like our little cottage, by which the river flows peacefully, and where roses and strawberries

come out of their own accord, to my great surprise, for I somehow only expect things to come out in shops.

It is the house Millais' mother once lived in, and some strange grotesque early works of his still hang on the walls. The sun sets just opposite the dining room windows, and the water and the dark trees and the brick red solemn sky of an evening put me so in mind of his pictures—Sir Isumbras crossing the Ferry, and the Vale of Rest

. . . I go to London when I can. Last night I dined out and met De Lesseps, who said that Sarah Bernhardt first suggested the Suez Canal to him and that they can trace the march of the Egyptians, and that the Israelites crossed close by their present works. Lord Broughton and Mrs Norton were also there. She looked like a beautiful slow sphinx.

*To J F Stephen<sup>1</sup> (in India)*

[September 1870].

I am all packed up, and for the last hour I have been struggling through a snow-storm of bills, letters, MSS., and putting things straight before I leave this kind green funny fat sleepy Snowdenham.<sup>2</sup> They are all asleep in the house, and the moon has streamed herself off, and I am very sorry to go, though I shall enjoy my excursion very much, if all keeps well with the dear folks here.

. . . What a strange tumultuous week this has been, the very silence of this place has brought the din more clearly to our ears, and we seem to have almost seen those poor doomed armies sweeping by.

When we heard the astounding news of the capitulation<sup>3</sup> we were in Guildford. Carry and your mother were waiting for me at the street corner, and when I told them (someone had just told me) Carry

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Sir James Stephen, Bart., K.C.S.I.

<sup>2</sup> My mother was on a visit to Lady Stephen.

<sup>3</sup> Sedan.

ran off in her blue shawl up the street for a paper, and your mother and I sat in the carriage and wondered about everything We thought most likely you had just heard it too, and all the way home, driving through the sweet evening with sunsetting clouds, we talked war, and the extraordinary chances that seem to come to sum up the past

To think of that dead old Napoleon filling the world *now*, with blood and sorrow, "Fire and blood and tears" as the *Times* has it What a history in a fortnight, since I last wrote to you, and while the nectarines on the old wall have been sweetening

I shall never forget the double impressions of utter stillness and peace here, and the vivid blaze of horror and battle there, of which the accounts reach us day by day Hayward goes off to the station for the *Times*, and your mother sits reading it in her chair by the open window all the morning and all the evening,—I cannot help myself—I go on and on reading column after column One can think of nothing else

I was French on Saturday, but since their insane flourishing and hurrahing, and embracing on Sunday, I began to think that a despot's was the only rule they were fit for You will read of their all *keeping* the guard at the bridges, and fraternising over the republic—and stabbing the picture It is all so utterly silly.

I wish you could see how well Minny is looking, thanks to this country air. We were secretly much relieved when Leslie came back safe from Switzerland, for even to be imprisoned as a spy is disagreeable He has returned very brown and well and *most elegantly dressed*!

*Journal 1870*

*September 10th.* I went north to the Lakes, to Edinburgh and from there to the Lows at Clatto. *October 1st* I returned home Dr John Brown came to see me off at the station, and brought me a basket of fruit and a silver fruit knife As the train started, two people in the carriage said, "Well, we have seen everything we wanted to see in Edinburgh except Dr John Brown" I said, "Why that was Dr. John Brown—won't you have some of his fruit?" To my dismay, they took the beautiful peach in the centre of the basket, leaving me only the humbler plums So much for affability !

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*To Mrs Tennyson*

16, Onslow Gardens  
[October 1870]

I was just going to write to you, when your note came, to ask if you would join in a little conspiracy to give Mr Carlyle a small token, like the seal he sent to Goethe?

I have written to Lady Ashburton and to Lady Stanley, his faithful friends Lady Airlie suggests a clock I have asked her and Mrs Froude, about twelve ladies in all, and we think the clock should cost £12 0 0

I long to see you again, and I send you all my true love

The token was duly purchased, and on February the 27th my mother writes in her journal "We met at Lady Stanley's and gave Carlyle the clock"

In *Chapters from Some Memoirs* she has described the scene—"The small presentation took place on Carlyle's birthday, a dismal winter's day, the streets were shrouded in greenish vapours, and the houses looked no less dreary within than the streets

through which we had come. Somewhat chilled and depressed, we all assembled in Lady Stanley's great drawing-room in Dover Street where the fog had also penetrated, and presently from the further end of the room, advancing through shifting darkness, came Carlyle.

"There was a moment's pause—no one moved, he stood in the middle of the room without speaking. No doubt the philosopher, as well as his disciples, felt the influence of the atmosphere. Lady Stanley went to meet him. 'Here is a little birthday present we want you to accept from us all, Mr Carlyle,' said she, quickly pushing up before him a small table, upon which stood the clock ticking, all ready for his acceptance. Then came another silence, broken by a knell sadly sounding in our ears. 'Eh, what have I to do with Time any more?' he said.

"It was a melancholy moment. Nobody could speak. The unfortunate prompter of the scheme felt her heart sinking into her shoes. Had she but had the wit to answer him cheerfully, to assure him that anyhow time had a great deal to do with him, the little ceremony might have been less of a fiasco than it assuredly was. And yet I think afterwards the old man must have been pleased, and liked to think he had been remembered."

In the Carlyle Museum, Cheyne Row, Chelsea, the following "paper of signatures" which accompanied the clock is still to be seen —

"To Mr. Carlyle from his affectionate friends  
27 February 1871."

H. M Stanley of Alderley	Anne Thackeray.
Juliet Pollock	Louisa Ashburton.
A Blanche Airlie.	Emily Tennyson
Anne Simeon Farrer.	Mary Rubina Stephen.
M. O W Oliphant	Henrietta Froude.
Frances Mary Blunt	Harriet Marian Stephen
Maude Alethea Stanley	A nameless friend <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> One last guinea was needed to make up the sum for the purchase of the clock. The "nameless friend" was my mother. In a letter to Mrs Oliphant in July my mother writes: "Minny met Mr. Carlyle the other day, he still talks about his clock and the paper of signatures."

*Journal 1870*

October 25th To see Madame Marochetti now in humble lodgings in Alfred Place, having left her beautiful house for the Germans Madame de la Haute in the same lodging, also having been obliged to leave her home and park Madame de Saade and her girls there too Madame de Saade still commenting, and keeping up her rôle of family mouth-piece

It was really moving to see them all so poor, so ruined and so undaunted. I had last seen Madame Marochetti in her Chateau Neulan-les-Muriers Real ladies, well-bred, high thinking and just the same as ever A lesson to all middle class ladies.

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*To J. F. Stephen (in India)*

16, Onslow Gardens  
November, but I can't remember where in it.  
[1870]

I did like your last letter. It was like a real anytime talk with you, and every word you said I could understand and sympathise with so entirely. Before you get this we shall have seen the lady you thought about at Metz Poor Metz! I think Bazaine is the man I most dislike and detest in it all How awful and vivid and branding it is on one's mind, or is it turning us all to sharks? I hear of people shot and maimed, and I hardly care, and yet it's all through everything. Yesterday, when I bought a penny paper, and read of certain peace, of a congress, and of every hopeful blessing, a load lifted from my mind —but in the *Times* of today there is nothing more of this, only worse and worse news.

God help us and give us enough of the spirit to still angry passions, and put an end to war for ever.

*To F F Stephen (in India)*

16, Onslow Gardens  
[December 1870]

Received of the Honble FitzJames Stephen one,  
two, three letters, with many many thanks

A I THACKERAY

This is a receipt, dearest Fitzy—and a little bit of paper to say a big thank you for the most delightful letters—one written in Council—one a little scrap—one an answer to what I had written to you about my mother They come in so kind and unchanging, like handshakes across the sea When will it be the real hand instead of the letters, and yet one is content to think that what one loses, is so great a gain to others.

Minny is saying, that she is happy to say that since Leslie's marriage, she thinks he has got to enjoy his food more than he used Enter Leslie who denies it. Now they are talking about *our* niece.<sup>1</sup> What new relation am I to you?

. . . Now I am starting off for a walk in the snow from a sense of duty, for it's impossible to get warm indoors I am going to see a poor little refugee lady with a husband fighting before Paris. Paris is farther than India nowadays Pray God help them It makes one's heart sink to read of Auberoche as I did last night

Who says "Women who tacitly encourage fighting are the real mitrailleuses"? and that if *all* women set their faces against war, it would do more than all the peace conventions It comes over one with a sort of shock to think of the horrible tortures we civilized nations inflict We who shudder at thumb-screws and religious persecutions, and yet think nothing of two countries going to war for the name of a province and the uniform of its militia. It is

<sup>1</sup> Minny's infant daughter

awful awful awful, and please God a day of peace will come at last, of real peace not breathing time.

*To F. Stephen (in India)*

16, Onslow Gardens  
[1870]

It's so cold I can hardly hold my pen—a blue three o'clock frost with a muffin—why do muffin bells always tinkle in the frost?

One doesn't know yet what news there is to-day. I suppose you as well as we, have read the telegram of the great battle, and I daresay you are thinking about it at this instant just as we are, God help them.

I was so touched by the poor preacher who prayed that he might pray only for a little success before the end—just enough to raise the French from the hopeless sorrow in which they were overwhelmed. When I heard Mr — and Mr — shouting out for war the other night, I felt I could have knocked their stupid heads together. War is so different from fighting, and shouting from either.

I saw the Sterlings yesterday, who were telling me how their Quaker friends had gone straight off at their own expense to help the peasantry. I have been writing a foolish little appeal for the French wounded.

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In the spring of 1871 my mother went to Paris to see her cousin Charlotte Ritchie, whose home was there. The Germans were still occupying the north of France, and the "Commune" had begun before my mother came away.

*Journal 1871*

*March 16th.* To Paris with Alice Probyn. Came from Le Havre. Saw the German helmets gleaming in the villages—blossoms on the fruit trees and the snow lying on the ground everywhere. The fortresses and outlying fortifications all round Paris terribly grim. Charlotte and Félicie's welcome to us all dim

and grey—everyone in black—empty streets Drove to Versailles next day German notices on the walls. To St Cloud, burnt, utterly destroyed—sunshine—people singing Frenchman to me—“Ecoutez-les! Ils chantent avec leur pays en ruines”

*March 17* Awakened by the cannon of Belleville. News of a Revolution—murder of the generals *People acting* in the streets as they described it all to one another. Woman comes up, “Vous êtes Anglaise Fuyez, fuyez!”

*March 21* Drove up Rue Pigalle, saw a barricade. Dined with D'Eychtals in the evening Met M Bersier, and heard of arrests

*March 22* To Madame Mohl's in the sunshine, met hurrying crowds of figures who looked as if they had come straight out of the French Revolution Massacre in Place Vendôme. Charlotte and I were out together, we rushed across fire of the guns to escape. We took refuge in the Church of St Roch, Rue St. Roch crowded with people turning out to fight, others running away, while others stood joking in their balconies.

Determined to leave Paris Railway in the hands of the Blues (Order) Reds advancing Our train moved out of the station just as the fighting between the Blues and Reds began Charlotte refused to come We got home by Newhaven At Rouen the Germans all asking us, “Was ist geschehen in Paris?” Home, calm silence, no guns—most horribly frightened now it was all over To bed quite done up

*March 25* To Aston Clinton, travelled down with Joachim Everyone coming up and asking me about Paris.

*May 25.* The news of the burning of Paris Burning sunset. I telegraphed to Charlotte through the Rothschilds.

*To J. F. Stephen*

16, Onslow Gardens  
[1871]

This is a race against time and the postman, and I seem to have so much to say to you and so little time in which to say it! Our clocks are badly set, I mean living clocks, and some go slower than time, and I am sure that is what makes me unpunctual!

. . . The other day I met dear old Mr. Carlyle walking along, and I rushed after him to talk to him about his *Life of Sterling*. You must have sent a brain wave, for oddly enough we had all just read the book and were full of it, when your letter came saying you too had been reading it. I wonder have you ever come across my father's review of it in the *Times*? Some day I should like you to know Julia Sterling—Sterling's daughter—I'm sure you would like her.

. . . I have been wearing the silver bangles in my hair where they look very nice indeed, but I cannot get rid of my cold and in consequence have to keep myself to mild entertainments and high dresses. Tonight I am going to dine at the Douglas Galtons. On Wednesday Leslie and I dined at Mr. Newton's, and met Ruskin.

*To Richmond Ritchie*

Aldworth<sup>1</sup>  
[1872].

. . . Minny says, "O Anny, how one does like one's own child," and when Leslie comes home tired, dusty, overworked, I hear the clump clump of footsteps running upstairs to the nursery. We are thinking of a new house; I am to have the ground floor for my own, which I shall like very much, and then Laura<sup>2</sup> will have a whole suite of apartments if

<sup>1</sup> The Tennysons' house in Sussex

<sup>2</sup> Daughter of Leslie and Minny Stephen.

she chooses, and Leslie will be up at the top of all with a skylight and a special ventilator for his pipe

I only came here for a breath of fresh air This is such a lovely view, almost too lovely for my special taste. I like a cock and a hen and a kitchen garden, and some lilies and lavender quite as well as these great dream worlds and cloud-capped lands. To me they are like the sonnet, "Farewell, thou art too dear for my possessing," and I can never appropriate a horizon, as one does a haycock, or a bunch of river weeds, or the branches of a tree

*To her Sister*

Lion-sur-Mer  
Calvados  
[August 1872]

I am writing on the sands "Look at that little boy Aunt Anny," says Francis, "I think he's going to bathe No! he's standing on his head The people don't much mind how they go here, I shouldn't think they'd mind much if they were naked, do you Aunt Anny?"



My own dear. How lonely you must be I am so glad Molly<sup>1</sup> is coming to you, and *do* get the boys. You can't think how much nicer they are than grown-up men

<sup>1</sup> Molly Alderson, now Lady Humphery



Here comes such a darling little girl,  
not a bit bigger than this, walking quite  
alone down to the sea.  
Happily a lady rose drip-  
ping out of the ocean to  
receive her

*To her Sister*

Lion sur-Mer  
[August 1872]

What shall my letter be about to-day darling? It's still fine—still nice—still exactly the same I go and write all the morning in a little room behind my bedroom, where nobody has found me out yet, except Felicie who rushed away.

We had a grand bathing early this morning. It was such fun to see the children rushing across the sands screaming with laughter, in funny little trousers and jackets, Margaret, Margy, Dolcie and Anny. Then they went into the sea, and the waves rushed over them, and the little ones screamed, and Blanche and Charlotte and I shrieked to the bathing men to bring them out. But the children all declared it was delightful, once they were out.

Blanche and Frank and I had a day of events yesterday First we got up at six o'clock, then we went to Caen and walked about and saw all the churches, and then after that, we took the train and went to Bayeux. It was so pretty and silent, and the old tapestry and the old cathedral just as usual and the little omnibus was starting for Arromanches and oh! I was so glad I wasn't going in it And then when we got back to Caen, we each ate two little cakes, and got a little carriage, and drove back here. Presently as the moon rose, our wheel went crash into the road, and we sat and patiently waited in a ditch, while the coachman stuck it on again. I gave

him a hairpin at last for he had nothing else, and the nail was broken

You will be amused to hear there has been a grand feast at Madame Bertin's Both the cures came, the fat one and the thin one The fat one was too tired to eat much The dinner was solemn and splendid, a turbot crowned with flowers, a chicken buried in sauce and truffles, a wreathed leg of mutton, tarts, cakes After dinner seven glasses were put in a semi-circle before Monsieur le Cure de Lion, for him to fill up with champagne, and serve round to each guest

I am sorry to say that Madame Bertin, the heroine of the feast, in her turquoise cap and purple silk, suddenly jumped up and left the room I fear it was my presence! I went with the children to-day to try and mollify her. She was friendly, but as we left the room said, "Those poor children! to have no one to see to them to have to walk home quite alone!"

Last night the sea was silver clear, the moon and the stars shone, and we watched the fishermen pushing down a boat through the moonlight, and then three great lines of surf came rolling in, as the boat glided from the shore A poor woman with a baby stood crying, because she did not want her "homme" to go—"A ben! c'est vrai, qu'on donne la vie pour garder la vie"

In March 1873 my mother and the Stephens moved to 8, Southwell Gardens, and she writes in her *Notes on Family History*: "Good-bye dear old house You have sheltered, warmed and comforted us. We were having a tea party I remember when the vans came to move us and our cups were carried right away out of the drawing-room"

In a letter to Hallam Tennyson, my mother describes the house "Here is a first letter from our new home, dear Hallam. If this is to be my home and my future life, I consider life scarcely worth

having. Two gas-men in one room, a carpenter in another, tap, screw, grind, vile bell, creaks. It's like a horrid dream and I don't know why we have so jumbled everything. Having now grumbled I confess this is much nicer (inside) than the other little old house, my room has a sort of imposing jail-like appearance, but a young man with chintz is coming to enliven it for me this morning"

My mother's novel *Old Kensington*, which had been appearing in the *Cornhill Magazine* from April 1872 to April 1873, was published in the Spring of this year and went through five editions. The illustrations for the book were drawn by George Leslie

*To Richmond Ritchie*

[1873.]

Scene—a cup of tea, George Eliot in a beautiful black satin dressing-gown by the fire, snow outside and German paper-books on the table, a green lamp and paper cutter

The shrine was so serene and kind that this authoress felt like a wretch for having refused to worship there before. She looked very noble and gentle, with two steady little eyes. You must go and see her. I am sure she will be a friend just as I felt her yesterday, not a personal friend exactly, but a sort of good impulse, trying to see truly, not to be afraid, and to do good to other people.

She said it was much better in life to face the very worst, and build one's cottage in a valley so as not to fall away, and that the very worst was this, that people are living with a power of work and of help in them, which they scarcely estimate. That we know by ourselves how very much other people influence our happiness and feelings, and that we ought to remember that we have the same effect upon

them. That we can remember in our own lives how different they might have been if others, even good people, had only conducted themselves differently

This part I'm glad to say I couldn't follow, nor could I remember at the moment a single instance of any single person's misconduct. She said too we ought to be satisfied with immediate consequences, and respect our work

[The remainder of this letter cannot be found.]

*Journal 1873*

*Feb 18* To Northbank with Mrs Procter to see George Eliot, such a disjointed visit Each talking their best and neither listening to the other

*March 15.* Walk in the rain with Carlyle Splash! Splash! Dined with the Leslies at Stratford Place. Eventful dinner. Sir John told me about Angelica Kauffmann and showed me her ceiling—thought of writing story

Life is like writing a story people and ideas come and go—and I try to make a plot of which the materials won't work out.

*Oct 4* The John Morleys to luncheon and Mr. Browning. We had a talk, he said "Everybody knows what they ought to do It's all nonsense about asking advice" Also he affirmed "As far as my own experience goes, I can see that all is right for me—I can't answer for anyone else—and that is all one can say"

*Nov 28.* To see Mr Carlyle who said "A cheese-mite might as well attempt to understand a cow and the great universe of grass beyond it, as we human mites might expect to understand our making and our Maker's secrets."

*Dec 1.* To Miss Landseer's. Am writing an article on Landseer for the *Cornhill*

Delicious morning, thank God for sunshine and peace and the fruits of the earth

*Journal 1874*

*Jan 1* I have just looked for a text for the new year. It is the draught of fishes If I could only attain to a dozen sprats!

Reproach myself for being morbid What is to be done? *Neatness* and as little thinking as possible!

*Jan 14.* To a delightful Ball, music, light, all radiant Even frivolity may be a divine Goddess after all.

*Jan 24* To Aldermaston—Herbert Spencer, Mr. and Mrs Reeve, Lord Aberdare, Miss Francis. Beautiful stars at night with a mysterious call in them Miss Francis said, "I should like to write the unsuccessful singer's story"

*Jan 30* Began to write *Angelica Kauffmann* I must give myself four or five hours off every day or I shall break down and be utterly useless

*Feb. 10* Read *Fumée*, Tourgenieff's novels frighten me, they are so like myself

*March 17* Dined with Mr. Knowles Met Cardinal Manning with his ring and his ascetic nose—Bishop of Gloucester and Mr Arnold there—never to be forgotten dinner

*March 20* To Paris with Mary Anne, for a week a mad but delightful extravagance

Ritchies, Cayleys dined with us, sat next General Badeau at dinner who asked me if one could do best without people or books? One doesn't want a library of people, but one could live without any books at all. They are only people after all, in a different shape.

*April 5.* Millais, Browning, Joachim at the Lehmann's party Millais "Ah! I saw her listening to you, Joachim" I "Mr. Joachim teaches us to listen,

just as you teach us to look and Mr Browning to think" Millais "O! It is all the same thing"

Mr Lehmann "Don't believe him, don't believe him, Miss Thackeray"

*April 29* Dined Lady M Feilding Interesting talk with Lord Lyttelton, and still more so with Dr Liebreich about the necessity of varying one's occupation.

*May 4* Breakfast with Gladstone Dr Tyndall there, invited him to Switzerland Dr Tyndall very Irish "He shall give his Angels charge over you—I will go with you" Mr Gladstone's tidy tidy study, Mrs Gladstone's dress unhooked, he stepped up and hooked it for her

*Whitsuntide* at Paris Pinkie and Leslie with me at Belard's Hotel. Stevenson lunched with us there tossing back his hair

### *To Richmond Ritchie*

Blois

*Yesterday [1874]*

All the old women have got their white caps on, the east wind has made every weather-cock shine I can't think how to tell you what a lovely old place it is, sunny-streaked up and down, stones flung into now from St Louis's days, others rising into carved staircases and gabions and gargoyle This isn't a description—I wish it were—it isn't white or crisp enough, or high enough There are broad flights and flights of steps going right up into the air, with the Bishop at the top and the Cathedral Service, and then this wonderful old garden and terrace and castle, and the ghosts of Guise and Henry III looking on through a doorway, and Catherine de Medici in her sunny bedroom opening upon loggias, and old roofs and birds and gardens. It is much more educated and sumptuous than other old towns

Gaston d'Orléans knocked down half the old castle

and stuck in a hideous Versailles-like caserne. He fortunately died just in time to save a beautiful sort of marble bird-cage staircase, up which we went with a guide who said "Hushsh—quand je parle, silence!" We are going to Tours tomorrow, Ella<sup>1</sup> has planned it all most beautifully, we lunch at an old castle, five o'clock tea at another, and little Peere fresh from his lessons knows all the dates as we go along

We went out church seeing quite early this morning, a small pastry cook's boy tripped into St. Roch, where a poor little child's funeral service was being chanted, the pastry cook boy had a tray on his head and a key in his hand, and he unlocked a grating, and then he neatly took his wares out of the tray, and popped them down in a side chapel I couldn't think at first what it could be that he was leaving there, and I am ashamed to say I asked him He looked horrified and said, "Pain benit," and ran away

Ella was at Chambord when I got there first, and I straggled up a hill to a quiet terrace with a plain below, and the boom of the vespers above, and then into the vespers where Ella found me, and took me off to see wonders

We have dined at the table d'hôte, a general covered with orders came in with a blind brother officer on his arm They looked very sad, both of them, but it was the same general, I *hope*, that we saw this morning flashing through the streets, with some other gorgeous pin-cushions on horseback.

*To Emily Ritchie*

Blois  
[1874].

How often I have wished for you these last three days, old castles, hot corners, black sweet shadows, lilacs, and the fruit trees all *smoking* with scent, and flinging with blossom, and rivers crawling and ghosts

<sup>1</sup> Mrs Williams-Freeman.

all beautifully dressed, dancing up and flitting along the paved marble galleries Ella and I settled that it was like going to a wonderful play, with all the scenery before one's eyes, and somehow one knew all the story of the play beforehand Then we acted it ourselves and conjured up the figures, Catherine de Medici and her prayer book, and scent bottles and her three sons, and the Huguenots and the King's mistress close by, and the tapestries on the wall, and the mouldy old beds and tables, and then oddly enough all the present coming sailing in and jumbling up with the ghosts Madame Say buying one castle full of sunshine from the ruined family, our friend Madame Picard installed in another, the Chaussee d'Antin and the Bois de Boulogne comfortably established among the dead courts, like the bees in the lion's carcase

Chenonceaux is a lovely old place that Catherine wrenched from Diana as soon as Henry II died and at Chaumont<sup>1</sup> the portress sat alone crying in a sunny courtyard, the lady was dead, and "ce bon M. le Marquis" and his brothers and sisters had had to sell the property

One of the absent brothers interested me very much He had chosen to live in Diana's own room, he painted shockingly, and had stuck up all sorts of artistic things on the wall. His name is Monsieur Georges, and he has never married The woman cried most of all about him, and couldn't imagine how I guessed he was a painter and of romantic disposition.

*To Hallam Tennyson*

8 Southwell Gardens

[1874].

I have just sent off a little article to the *Pall Mall Gazette*. It was a horrid corvée to begin with, and

<sup>1</sup> Catherine de Medici's own gloomy castle which she never desired to see again after the death of Henri II Catherine gave Chaumont to Diane in exchange for Chenonceaux

only the thought of Mrs Cameron's indignant apparition this morning spurred me on to it. But I finished in a little thrill, thinking of the day I first read the *Idylls of the King* and of this, which is, that people may say what they like about modern thought, (and I know there is an utterly astounding and complicated Something gathering, which is quite too strong and direct for people like me, who were brought up in narrower times, to grasp or understand,) but what I do feel is, that neither the awful truth from science, nor the melodies and raptures and roses of Swinburne, nor the viviselections of *Contemporaries* and *Fortnightly Reviews* need put away the clear clanging of King Arthur's sword or Colonel Newcome's old cavalry sabre, and those Excaliburs, I thank God our fathers have always held. That is the only sentence I didn't write in my article, but I can't help finishing it off to you.

*To Richmond Ritchie*

8, Southwell Gardens  
[1874]

. We met Salvini that night we came home. Minny sat next him; he has a vault-like brow, and stood on a balcony and said, "Ora, che la rrrreconenza, etc , etc " I sat next Mr Browning at dinner. He described a Greek poem, and suddenly seized my chair and twirled it right round, inspired by the thought of a blind father recognising his daughter's hand, he did it beautifully, but with too much action

*To Richmond Ritchie*

Cornwall, July 12th [1874]

Did the wind ever blow your window-pane into the room ? The white gulls were going through all sorts of incantations yesterday, and I suppose this is the result. This is a most stormy peaceful time, the most

conversational blank vacuity—although we talk on unceasingly

The elements are our one excitement. You walk through a great blowing wind into a mist, and across a moor with brown cropping cows, and a horn blowing out of the sea, with rocks flinging out quite black, and all sorts of currents and waves streaming in from the horizon, and then you come to a most detestable little object called Bude, with a dripping man on horseback riding down the street, and then you are quite wet through and come home in a little thing called a Jingle and then you go out again next day into another sort of wind, capricious without any rain

It blew us up hill to a place where a great delicious Italian valley suddenly enclosed us, and after a picnic of whirling viands and papers and sprinkling soda-water bottles, Edward went to fish in a stream, and we struggled on with the Jingle to the top of the hill. An old Saxon cliff, high up among the gulls, with a lovely peaceful crumbling church<sup>1</sup> in a sheltered hollow, and a wall of sudden blue sea and sky and downs, old gates and stone stiles, graves softly rolling into grass and an old grey rectory. I am sure it was Ophelia's churchyard. It was unexpected and all delicious with ivy and a scent of fragrant herbs—and after our long windy toil everything became sunset, and some day you must see it. Mervynshoe is *not* the name of the place. Perhaps if I stay on another year or two here, I shall regain my memory, as well as my other faculties.

*To Hallam Tennyson*

Venice  
[1874]

I wonder if you are driving Minny along the lane at this minute, while I am listening to the whirr of

<sup>1</sup> The church of Hawker, the Cornish poet, at Morwenstow on the Cliff

St. Mark's great clock, the humming of voices, the blowing of the trumpet, which seems to tell everybody everything they ought to do It tells the sun to rise, the soldiers to go to bed

The scene has changed now to the little apartment (where the ink happens to be) that Mrs Ritchie<sup>1</sup> has taken, with its grass blinds looking on the sea, and its shuttered windows looking towards the little street at the back. And how the bells are clanging and how impossible it is to write except just to bore our poor friends with long elaborate accounts of things, that lose all their wonder by being named in wrong words.

Mrs Ritchie and Chattie are gone to church, a little child is talking Italian outside, all the footsteps are coming and going I think you are at church too, and Mr Isaacson has just begun his sermon, because it is an hour earlier with you than with us, and if he were an Italian he would just be finishing it. I heard one last Sunday in Milan Cathedral; the preacher was fulminating against the "heretici," the women had taken off their shoes to listen more attentively, and everything went up and down and the incense burnt and Italy throbbed, when rather to my despair Mr Mundella, the member, said, "Miss Thackeray, do you remember our meeting at Brixton? etc etc."

*To Margie and Annie Thackeray<sup>2</sup>*

Venice  
[1874].

I have just come home from a romantic float in a gondola with Pinkie We started off into the great dark canal with silver ghosts of islands and towers and a moon, and we looked up at the sky, and the gondolier said "Music Madama, shall I sing?" So Pinkie said "Sing," and then he sang us a song,

<sup>1</sup> Her future mother-in-law

<sup>2</sup> My nieces, who were then small children

about a lovely blond and "amor, amor" in a loud croaking voice, and between each verse he rocked the gondola very violently

Then we shimmered out over the moonlight and the gondolier began to sing another song, (he told us ladies asked for it) It was the "Echo Song," and it came answering back to us over the stars and water, and then a great lighted-up ship in the distance began to hoot and get ready to steam away, and the clock struck eleven and the gondolier sang on, and Pinkie said, "Horrid wretch, I wish you would tell him to leave off," but he only sang louder and louder, and everything grew more and more beautiful To stop him we asked him to take us under the Bridge of Sighs, and it was so frightening—all dark black and whispering Our gondola and another whistled quietly past each other under the bridge, and we heard voices singing in the distance and our gondolier took up the chorus and began to row away, and when we came back to the bridge he said "Now pay for the music Madama, and we can go home" After that we said goodnight to Pinkie and Charlotte and Nelly, and left them locked up in their little house by their beautiful peasant girl, and now there is a mosquito humming round my room, but Richmond has given me a wonderful box of pastils that keep them in good temper and prevent them from biting and so goodnight, my darling children

From your loving You know Who

Guess whom I saw before I came away? Miss Yonge<sup>1</sup> she is very handsome, something like Blanchie<sup>1</sup> only older, with grey hair; and she gets £1,500 a year for her copyrights where I get £150 So you see how right you were to entreat me into writing like Miss Yonge I am going to read the *Castle Builders*, when I have time, and I am finishing the last fairy tale I ever mean to do

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Warre-Cornish

*To her Sister*

Perugia  
[1874].

This is like a beautiful dream. I am looking at an abyss and a great high dandified exquisite old city, and through the gates the milky oxen go crawling up the hill with men in long cloaks and swinging lanterns. There are arches so high up that one's hat tumbles off if one looks at them and there is the wide grey and olive view. There are little orange trees along the road, and narrow streets with sheets of country at the end, and these high Renaissance tip-toe sort of houses with arches and dragons and kings and palmers.

We met Sidney Colvin here, who stepped out like a mediæval saint up on the terrace. Gussie and Richmond are going to Rome to-morrow, and we all drive together to Assisi, and then Pinkie and I are going back to my circular ticket by a little round. I suppose we shall sleep at Bologna to-morrow. We are very sorry to part. We have all been in a most absurd state of rapture, and next time, unless you come, I shall come alone and gush less, and write descriptions for a book.

*To Hallam Tennyson*

8, Southwell Gardens

[November, 1874]

How do you do, dear Hallam? Various little objects will come from me to say this to you, also a photograph from Venice which however has not yet arrived.

It is but an idiotic object that is writing to you, swathed in veils from the village of Santa Margarita, where I carefully prepared for future influenza! They (the veils) were bought in a little sunny sort of parlour with a monk and a priest at the glass door,

and a blue bay just beyond, and a boat waiting to convey us to a castle on a hill, and a lovely lovely maiden cooking Italian dishes and an old woman up in a tree gathering figs for us, and all the Spezia hills leaping up like fish out of the water

After this, is it in human nature not to shudder at the contrast of Southwell Gardens, a policeman, and a feeble effort to find one's way to Weymouth Street in a damp sort of an afternoon fog? But to-day the sky looks a most inspiring blue, and Minny and Leslie (he came to meet me at the train with a hansom that night I came back) were so glad to see me, and Laura gave such darling little capers, that it would be inhuman nature to grumble really

One very romantic and exciting thing we have done—the first night of *Hamlet* Irving was Hamlet, and made us feel the part could have been played in no other way All the reporters were there with their note-books, and all the house cheered and shouted, and Mr. Aide sat behind us and made himself very agreeable, and the Pollock family floated before our eyes

We were going away, when old Mrs Bateman called us to go behind the scenes Minny and I stood behind a drapery, and saw the duel scene, and heard the audience roaring and roaring, and it seemed as if all the atmosphere of *Hamlet* were round about us Then up came Irving looking very handsome and pale, and quite natural, as a man must be who's just been being anything so real, and he thanked us so warmly when we said how we admired it Then someone called to him, "Go, go, they are calling for you," and he threw down his cloak and ran off and came back again, paler than ever to finish his sentence. I believe it is all your father's suggestion to him that night at Richmond

*To Richmond Ritchie*

Brighton

[Vivianoor, 1874]

. Brighton is very nice and cheering and homish after my empty Palazzo for three weeks I came down—so funnily—with Hamlet<sup>1</sup> in a sombrero, a staff in his hand and a wrapper on his arm. All the ticket collectors and porters knew him, and flew for his luggage, to which he pointed as if it had been the grave of Ophelia

Irving was very melancholy and talked mysterious allusions to his wife He says he envies painters so, who can see the works of those who went before, while poor actors can only look at each other

*To Richmond Ritchie*Paris  
[1875]

. Mr Payn writes sternly for the revise for my story and I must not write any more now

David Morice beams and comes to luncheon, Charlotte goes her own way and so do we all, but thank God, though we go our own ways, we can still somehow keep one bit by which we all travel along together, that bit which belongs to us all I don't think people need ever be afraid of living, or failing, or anything at all, for our lives are much wiser than we are

This calm has been so good for me, and sometimes I feel for a few minutes quite bored and young and blank, just as I used to do and so delightfully sleepy

. Yesterday I went to call at a most horrible literary stuffy sham Faubourg St Germain salon Madame Blaze de Bury was exactly like a character in *Tourgemieff*, and welcomed an Alexis Alexandrovitch, and gave him tea with shrieks of surprise and

<sup>1</sup> Irving, who was acting Hamlet

rapture, and then asked me with a scream of delight how I wrote such charming books? These are the questions which are so impossible to answer

*To Leslie Stephen*

Paris  
[1875]

I think I shall write to you to-day instead of to my Minny . . . I went to Madame Mohl's last night after dining at Charlotte's with Douglas Freshfield, who is a cheering apparition and who is coming to take me to the pictures this morning

At Madame Mohl's we found Madame Bodichon and a circle of ladies and gentlemen, and a little round sort of flapping man who talked most beautifully This was Renan I like him so much better than I expected, because I see though it's partly put on, yet it is instinctive real feeling, which makes him sentimental. He gives lectures on Hebrew, and old Mr Mohl gives lectures on Arabic and Persian, and another slightly younger Professor who gave lectures on Latin and Greek They seemed to me like a set of old grammars walking about But Renan is like a very fat ill-bound grammar and dictionary all put up together His shirt buttons did not do Madame Renan credit, (she is also extremely broad and smiling) and Renan said that everything belonging to sentiment, art, feeling, belief, etc. requires participation, but the things belonging to science are content to stand alone without anybody else He said that nobody ever persecuted to prove a thing that was provable, such as a problem of Euclid, but only to prove a thing that was unprovable such as religion or dogma, and then they all began to praise Herbert Spencer like mad. It's much nicer there than at Madame Blaze de Bury, with her shrieks and heraldic fuss I drove home in a coupé along the river and looked at the stars and wished that Annie and Margie

were grown up and could come to parties with me Young Mr Belard, who was taking a sentimental stroll up and down the Rue du Dauphin, stepped up and paid my cab, and I returned to my alcove with a book of dear Sainte-Beuve's His essays are much too short, and just make one interested and then leave off How he does hiss at everybody, Rigault, Constant and Lamennais and all of them.

I have been trying to think about cynicism, it is only dwelling on what is not, instead of thinking of what *is* in people I am sure faults and bad feelings are only "lacunes" and good—facts

*To Mrs. Douglas Freshfield*

Paris  
[1875]

It seems so long time since I have had a talk with you (writing isn't quite talking, nor is it thinking, there ought to be some word for it)

My solitary flight has been delightful, and my nerves can't believe that they are me I can write a note without an effort and read a book again, and Helen Colvin has quite touched me by the letter she sent after she went away

We went to the play the other night with a moon and shooting stars, and Mr Aslee in attendance with an opera hat, two little golden sugar tongs and a box of the most delicious iced fruit, that we ate in the intervals of the seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth commandments All the grand ladies of Paris were in the theatre, sitting about in boxes, with shoulders and diamonds and frizzed heads Madame de Gallifet, Madame de Pourtales. They look like thin slim pale Maxses, and the play was wonderful, condensed and powerful like a gun being let off. It is called *Julie*, and Madame Favart dies at the end in remorse and pink satin

. . . This is written upon some special paper I

have bought for my new story, so as to keep it distinct from *Angelica* who went off suddenly to Australia with her feet foremost, and the proofs all wrong and the end *first!!!* I cannot think what will happen, and I am so thankful Australia is such a long way off, and that Trollope doesn't read novels, and that George Grettan is in England

*To Richmond Ritchie*

Hotel des Alpes  
Interlaken  
August 11th [1875]

All Cambridge seems to be about There is Henry Butcher sitting under a tree waiting for his luggage, in one of Leslie's shirts Mr and Miss Browning were not at the station Mr Balfour is somewhere We met Professor Tyndall, D C L in the road, smilingly escorting some ladies of rank Laura and Leslie on the box, Minnie, Gennie, myself inside. We were coming down from clouds and echoes to this beehive, flowing with fountains, and with green benches beside the bubbling waters Willy and Mr Drury walked in one day at Rosenlau, wet through and through, and walked off very dry and cheerful next morning Have you done your work? Have you been comfortable? Leslie goes back to-morrow and we shall wait for a fortnight.

I have been trying to do my work but I have not done one word, however I think I have seized on two little will-o-the-wisps I do envy George Sand and George Eliot so when they strike up and begin to tune their instruments, especially George Sand, who seems to me to boom an echo all through her prefaces, and sweep one into her stupid books so that it doesn't matter how stupid they are

*To Richmond Ritchie*

Hotel des Alpes  
Interlaken  
August [1875]

This is a Federal pen, the young lady at the shop strongly recommended it All the stars are rushing in a stream between the Mountain and my window, the music is over, and so is the Tyrolean concert I didn't go to it, for Leslie carried me off to-day for a long agonizing delightful toil up a pine wood, through strawberries, tree stems, lake dreams, mountain ranges, to a chalet somewhere high up beyond a raven's haunt, where some Americans on donkeys who had arrived before us were resting on a bench, and where we suddenly saw the great white Monk and Monte Rosa through dappled clouds, as we sat on a little balcony and ate bread and honey and looked over the valleys

This is next morning now, how I wish one could send all that one sees to you and to all other poor hard-worked people who really want it! I should like to send you a pine tree and a bunch of wild strawberries, a valley of sloping, nodding flowers with thousands of glittering spiders' webs, the high up snows and far below lakes, and yesterday's yellow evening, dying rather sadly behind the pine ridge and the misty Stockhorn.

We sat on a little bench yesterday looking down at the lake and two lines from a steamer, which rippled on and on for about an hour, and then a raven came and croaked, and then just as we were going home and considered ourselves exhausted, the American on his donkey came up, and we felt obliged to follow, and Leslie counted his money in something like a parlour.

When we got down again, Interlaken was all chinese-lanterned and stepping out in veils and table d'hôte attire, and not near so tired as we were, and

then the music came sleepily in at the open window, and now the "Valse des Adieux" is changed into Sunday bells and a cock crow and a jodel

We have a very nice gentle doctor travelling with us. He is ill, bald, and has left his family at Freshwater, and yesterday as we went along, while Leslie discovered short cuts and pointed out mysterious little dents and points in the mountains, Dr Liveing was darting among the brushwood after *twistyfolium* and *stingfingeriensis* which he put carefully away in his little box. How nice it would be if one could send one's eyes and one's soul up mountains, and wait on some mossy bank down below. A donkey seems to be a sort of compromise.

Now we are sitting in a little artificial temple, half sham rocks and half real creepers. Through one window there is a fountain, through another there is a glass globe to reflect all the little apparatuses, through another there is a little Russian boy and Einspanners and birds and rain impending, and Sunday godless in hats, and Sunday orthodox going off to church in bonnets, and Leslie gazing at Laura, and Louise saying, "Ach, Miss Tackry, now write a nice book all about all de tings". The little Russian boy is enormously fat and has been adopted by a romantic Princess who lavishes her affections upon him, and he is squeaking and squeaking in the most horrible way to attract our attention, and that horrid Louise is . . .

Here comes the Doctor and the *Saturday Review* and a little boy with raspberries. Now Leslie is saying very deliberately that I and the Dr shall go up to-morrow on a donkey to the Schingeplatte, and he will go down to Grindelwald and order rooms, and Gennie and Minny are going in an einspanner, and how it is all settled I don't quite know.

The Dr is talking gently about health to Leslie  
He says medicines are a mere accident but that  
people certainly are medicinal, some are sedatives,  
some are tonics some are irritants. ("Ah!" says  
Leslie)

Dearest Tonic, Good-bye What pages and  
pages'

## IX

1875-1877

On November the 27th 1875, Minny Stephen died

### *Notes on Family History*

Leslie and I spent a miserable and terrible winter in Southwell Gardens Richmond used to come up and see me from Cambridge, like new life in the darkness and gloom.

In the late summer we moved from Southwell Gardens to Hyde Park Gate. Margie and her sister were living with us, and Leslie used to take them to school every morning If I live, try and be as good as I can, don't get frightened, be faithful, be moderate yet unending in feeling.

One night I dreamt that it was Papa's funeral over again. There was a strange clanging music, I stood by the grave and people came and shook me by the hand and somehow they took his hand too

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### *To Richmond Ritchie*

Mentmore  
[1876].

. . . The more I think of it, the more I feel as if a day might come, when people will think of Death with love and blessing and gratitude for the past and with less sorrow and gloom. I think that for those younger than oneself, for lives that might have run alongside of one's own, there must ever be anguish,

but for those older and more tired, whose days have been spent out, if I had my way I should scarcely put on black I didn't think so once There was a great field full of lambs yesterday and chestnut trees in bud, which put me more in mind of Minny than all the gloom that ever was massed together

*To Mrs. Oliphant*

8, Southwell Gardens  
[1876].

I have not yet finished, for as I was crying my heart's bitterness away over your dear dear beautiful words, Leslie came in and I gave him your letter to read. How sweet of you to bring home back again round about us, and give it all back for a little bit—to take a day out of old days that were truly at peace—instead of this strained peace that is beyond us still, though some day it won't be any more . . .

It seems so strange only to have signs of all our happy past, and yours has been a real sign, and God bless you and thank you.

*To Richmond Ritchie*

Brighton  
[1876]

I am sure you will like to know that the sun began to shine and the dog to bark and the kettle to boil and the children to go down by the sea this afternoon and Leslie found Mr. Morley, and Laura has two red cheeks, and Annie and Margie are sitting in the window and I have got the second volume of Heine from Mr. Morley, and the lodgings are still unutterably fusty, but the window is fresh, and the sea was delicious to-day tossing with little sudden fishing boats, and the fat old landlady cooks very nicely, and Louise is in a good temper, and I am so glad yesterday is over, for to-day is so much nicer.

. . . I should like to write something about George

Sand<sup>1</sup> I wish I had sent the letter I wrote her once (which I burnt) so as to have crossed pens with her once

*To Richmond Ritchie*

8, Southwell Gardens  
[1876]

Mrs Oliphant and Mrs Trollope walked in this afternoon most beautifully dressed. Then I went out and I took the train to Clapham and there I met Tom Taylor who walked with me to Janie's.<sup>2</sup> Seeing her did me good, for it was all sunset and gentle, and I sat by her bed in the window. She has a grey room full of azaleas, and all her hair shines and her face looks like an angel's, and little Harry Hughes was deep in an arm-chair reading *Vanity Fair*. All the green was breaking from the branches and the sky was fresh and crisp and indifferent. Coming back in the train there was a little old lady who kept jumping up and down to look at the dome of the oil cloth manufactory and the tower of the water works. It seemed almost too much interest at that age.

*To Richmond Ritchie*

8, Southwell Gardens  
[1876]

. . . I have been spending a very lazy day reading the life of Godwin by the fire. I wasn't very well, and I thought I would keep warm and quiet and all these people have amused me. Sometimes for a little bit I forget myself as I read, but never for very long. I was very glad when Job<sup>3</sup> came in and called me back to all the things and people that are not in books. When I am alone I don't know where I go, all the things grow vague. We went to Kate Perry's in a hansom and found Julian Sturgis there.

<sup>1</sup> George Sand died at Nohant, June 8, 1876

<sup>2</sup> Mrs Nassau Senior

<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Brookfield

Kate remembered Mrs Shelley very well, and Job told a little story of Mrs Opie bursting into tears and rushing away from a dinner-table at Rogers'

I am in such a rage with Mrs. Inchbald for her cruel letter to Godwin when his wife died, that I don't feel that I could ever write one word about her. She said to him that she never knew Mrs. Godwin at all intimately and had avoided doing so from self-respect, as she did not wish to make friends with a person who etc., etc. or something to that effect. How could she write like that upon the day of her death?

. . . They have sent me Charles Dickens from the library. I can't tell you how curiously people's different atmospheres strike me. I find all my childhood in Dickens, and then Macaulay is my young ladyhood, and as for my grown-upness, since that is personal and not founded entirely on other people, it is in living beings and not in books.

. What suddenly cheered me up just now was thinking what prizes I have drawn in Life, what dear, dear prizes. No one ever had such a life as mine, or such love in it, each after its own kind, and this I do feel in my heart.

*To Richmond Ritchie*

[1876]

It was just as nice as ever, only rather nicer, to see your writing lying on the little round table in the drawing-room quite calm in the centre of this very whirling day. Bristol, Clevedon, where haven't we been? I found my poor wasted old aunt sitting with her cats in her dreary room. It's a terrible thing to see . . . It's distracting to think of such a waste of life and generous feeling, and power of affection. She is exactly like Lady Sarah Francis in *Old Kensington*, only much more dreary.

But this isn't what I wanted to tell you about, but

the terrace at Clevedon Court,<sup>1</sup> with a fountain dropping into a marble basin, and beyond a sight of all the summer in the valley, all the silver in the sea, and the old grey ivy gables

It only lasted about ten minutes, then the sun came out after the rain and we all went into the garden, and the trees bloomed again and the lights flowed down the steep daisy slope, and then the fly came to carry us off I had a letter from Mrs Elton this morning prompted by Job of course, to ask us. Papa had always talked about Clevedon, and Job had always told us about it, and I own I had a fancy to go there

So off we started and found Sir Arthur Elton the most gentle and humorous person, who was affectionately kind to us, and a distinguished-looking lady with beautiful little children, like roses picked off the porch—and this wonder of sweetness outside, and inside oak panels, ancestors and oriels.

I finished my story roughly to-day, and am so ashamed of it that I am sending it straight off by the same post as this I have still a little bit to do in the middle, and then I shall get at last to Susanna who has been waiting and waiting Paris and the Red Republicans will come in very well, and the seaside and a great deal of wind How do you think

*Susanna by the Seaside  
a new novel  
by the author of  
The Village on the Cliff.*

would do?

<sup>1</sup> Clevedon Court was the original of Castlewood in *Esmond*

*To Richmond Ritchie*

Low Bank  
Coniston  
[1876]

This is our address, it is extremely damp, with clear lovely things and scents and tints. The hills are not very high, but they are just like the clouds drifting by the lake, and there are two sloping golden fields to the boat-house with two little calves browsing. There are syringa bushes everywhere and streams of buttercups flowing down to the real water which is reticulated with a sort of silver net-work.

We were rather tired when we got here, and then Leslie went to the Victor Marshalls', while I could only go to sleep on the sofa. It would have made Minny so happy to be here and every little flower and cloud and tint seems to ache for her.

We have to row across the lake to the village. We didn't mean to go to Mr Ruskin's, but we found ourselves at his door, and three maids just like Pilgrim's Progress maidens said Mr Ruskin only saw people by appointment, and I didn't want to go in, but left my address and said it would be very kind of him to come and see me, and then Laura set off running straight down into the lake and I had to rush after her, and then Leslie rowed us back.

*To George M. Smith*

Low Bank  
Coniston  
July [1876]

Yesterday Mr Barrow came in with a tray and a letter in your handwriting, a kind, kind, long hand-shake it seems to me and I shall think so every time I put on my too-beautiful, exquisitely fitting gloves.<sup>1</sup> I immediately called on Mr. Ruskin proudly, for my

<sup>1</sup> A gift from Mr Smith

fingers were through last time I went, and they are the most perfect fit and I am so touched and pleased and thank you, dear Mr Smith

I wish you could see our lovely lake, and that you could come to lunch this minute—Laura is with her little rake in the hayfield, and there is a Jane Eyre kitchen out of the parlour, with a dear old woman and Timothy her son who are cooking our mutton Everything is sunning and scorching and melting outside, and we are living in this little farm among slopes and chestnut trees and with a view like a dream

I am beginning to like it now—at first it only made me long for the holidays that are not ours any more—I do hope Leslie will be better in a few more days I am getting anxious about him for he doesn't rally one bit, he can't walk without being overtired, and mopes about so that it makes one's heart ache to see Sometimes he cheers up a little, and Victor Marshall is so good to him but then he goes back again. Laura is the one thing he really clings to

How are you all, and how is my dear Lizzie ? She would be amused by Mr Ruskin's lovely little æsthetic encampment here They are all in fits of delight over *scraps*, not the lake and the mountains, but a gooseberry or a feather off a chicken's head or something of that sort. But I do like them so, and he is a kind gentle dear old fellow and sometimes he talks quite beautifully There is Mr Severn who floats off bareheaded in a small sailing yacht, and we have a sort of punt and the Marshalls a life-boat, and of a sunset it is quite lovely

Ruskin has beautiful old bibles, and missals and above all such nice strawberries at his house He says if you can draw a strawberry you can draw anything

## X

1877-1894

IN May 1877 my father and mother became engaged to be married. She writes of her engagement to Richmond Ritchie in the following letter

*To Andrew Hichens*

[1877.]

It is very nice to get a friend's good will and wish and may yours bring us in as good fortune as ours brought to you. How happy your marriage did make my sister and me!

If it were not Richmond, I should be afraid to take such a life's gift, but he knows his own mind so clearly, that this blessing of affection seems to have lightened the darkness in which I have been living, and now at last I feel as if it were ungrateful indeed if we did not take the happiness which has come like a sort of miracle. Please give my love to the dear people all round you

On Thursday, the 2nd of August, 1877, my father and mother were married at Kensington church early in the morning.

Howard Sturgis writing of my father says. "Richmond Ritchie possessed one of the surest and most brilliant minds I have ever known. He had begun to think, and to think for himself, long before most men are quite sure what thought means. In Cambridge days his contemporaries looked forward to seeing his name blazing among the immortals, and I have never been able to get over a certain sense

of waste at the harnessing of such a Pegasus—though the vehicle he was condemned to draw was nothing less than the huge juggernaut car of England's Indian dependency. We are constantly exhorted 'to hitch our waggon to a star' and perhaps if more stars of his magnitude were hitched to the official waggons they might run more smoothly. No wife ever respected her husband more whole-heartedly than Anne Ritchie, his nature supplied the prop on which hers could spread itself most happily to the sun."

Shortly before his marriage my father had entered the India Office. As private secretary to the successive Parliamentary Under-Secretaries of State 1883–1891, he gained a remarkable reputation for insight into the vast and tangled problems of Indian administration. From 1895 to 1902 he was private secretary to the Secretary of State for India Lord George Hamilton. In 1902 he was appointed Secretary to the Political and Secret Department of the India Office, and on the retirement of Sir Arthur Godley, in 1909, succeeded him as Permanent Under-Secretary of State for India, which post he held until his death in 1912. He received the C.B. in 1898 and the K.C.B. in 1907.

#### *Notes on Family History*

In May, 1878, Richmond and I settled into our own house, 27, Young Street, Kensington Square. It was the prettiest old house with a long garden at the back and an ancient medlar tree with a hole in it. There was also a lovely tall acacia tree. In those days before Kensington Court was built, there were other gardens full of birds and trees, and beyond the tall spire of the church

#### *Journal 1879*

*January 10th.* Dined at Mr. Aïdé's. Met Rhoda Broughton, who began her friendship with Richmond most characteristically. He was sitting next to her

on the opposite side of the table to me, and when I introduced him she paid him no attention.

He "I believe we are being introduced"

She : "How very disagreeable"

In May we went for a little tour in Holland

*May 23rd* Delightful awakening Walk through Antwerp Cathedral—Pictures—drive.

*May 25th* Cathedral—mass—Rubens' great Descent. In the afternoon to the Zoo with Pen Browning

*May 26th* To Rotterdam by Dordrecht.

*May 27th* To the Gallery, Frans Hals—Bol—Van der Helst

*May 28th* To the Hague The railway journey was delightful with a sight of a hundred spotless interiors and then 10,000 windmills and cows A walk in this Versailles-like town

To Scheveningen with the fleet coming in and the miracle of the fishes.

*May 29th* Haarlem Couldn't sleep for delightful sights! Franz Hals,—wrote to Millais—they are such kindred spirits

To Amsterdam in the evening—passed fields of flowers

*June 1st.* To the Stadt House. Once more looked at Rembrandts Found the Trevelyan's there George Trevelyan said "Look at that wall and the faces during the Spanish Inquisition, and at that wall and the comfortable burghers after the horror was removed."

*June 4th.* Brussels More pictures *6th June* Crossed home

*To Mrs. Tennyson*

Rotterdam  
*May 27 [1879]*

I was dreaming of you all last night, and I feel as if I must tell you how I think of you, and send you my

faithful love Richmond told me the sad peaceful news<sup>1</sup> as we were starting Your sorrows and your realities seem only to make me know more and more how much I owe you, and how much of my life seems to belong to you and yours

We have had such a happy journey while you have all been in sorrow, but I know you will sympathise in this too It has done me immense good for I was really ill when I came away, and I seem to have left my languor and sickness at Dover

We have been at Calais, and at Antwerp hearing the organs and the Rubens The fine Rubens are like sunshine and make one's heart jump, but there are only two or three that one really cares for

Pen Browning was at Antwerp nodding to the inhabitants We came here to-day We are going on to the Hague to-morrow to make friends with Rembrandt

I can't imagine a quainter and more vivid place to come to for a short time than Holland

The absurd women here wear *bonnets* with artificial flowers over their caps and gold blinkers and rams' horns It has the craziest look

### *To her Husband*

May 24, 1880

I am still thrrrrrilling over a conversation I had yesterday with Charles Lewes Lionel Tennyson was here, he declared that his hair stood on end as he listened Charles Lewes said he wished to tell me all about the wedding<sup>2</sup> He gave her away, and looks upon Mr. Cross as an elder brother.

I asked him if she had consulted him and he said no, not consulted, but that she had told him a few weeks ago She confided in Paget who approved and told her that it wouldn't make any difference in

<sup>1</sup> The death of Mrs Charles Tennyson Turner.

<sup>2</sup> George Eliot's marriage to Mr Cross

her influence Here I couldn't stand it, and said of course it would, but it was better to be genuine than to have influence, and that I didn't suppose she imagined herself inspired, though her clique did It rather shocked him, and he mumbled a good deal. Young Lewes is generous about the marriage He says he owes everything to her, his Gertrude included, and that his father had no grain of jealousy in him, and only would have wished her happy, and that she was of such a delicate fastidious nature that she couldn't be satisfied with anything but an ideal tête-a-tête George Eliot said to him if she hadn't been human with feelings and failings like other people, how could she have written her books

He talked about his own mother in confidence, but his eyes all filled up with tears over George Eliot, and altogether it was the strangest page of life I ever skimmed over She is an honest woman, and goes in with all her might for what she is about

She did not confide in Herbert Spencer They have taken a beautiful house in Cheyne Walk

In 1881 my mother's book *Miss Williamson's Divagations* was published, and to this year also belongs her *Life of Madame de Sevigné*, written for Mrs Oliphant's edition of Foreign Classics My mother said her best writing was to be found in this biography and in her novel *The Village on the Cliff*

*To her sister-in-law, Emily Ritchie (in India)*

27, Young Street  
Kensington  
[1881].

. . . Everybody is asking me to dinner and begging for copies.<sup>1</sup> They did not think there was so much life left in me!

*Madame de Sevigné* has gone to Mr Blackwood

<sup>1</sup> *Miss Williamson's Divagations*

*Miss Williamson* is a success, but of course the other is what I really care about Mrs Procter is triumphant I have made such a sensation

I am so glad that you have met Mr Lyall<sup>1</sup> He is one of my enthusiasms which are very far between now His sister, Mrs Holland, is one of the most charming people we have ever known, and knows everything about Madame de Sevigne Bernard Holland is his nephew and very often comes to dine of a Sunday, and Mr Herbert Paul of a Saturday We hardly see anyone else except five o'clock tea ladies.

*To Emily Ritchie (in India)*

27 Young Street  
[February 1881]

I have just come from a happy hour over Petitot's miniatures at the South Kensington Museum. Having sent off my Mme de Sevigne's MS, I went to treat myself with a dilettante sight of all my friends' portraits They are just like real people only more silent, more courteous, more unchanging.

. I haven't written to you since George Eliot died, and now dear old Carlyle is gone Fred Myers asked me last night which I put highest Of course to my generation Carlyle is a far more powerful influence George Eliot seems more to me like an expression and interpretation than an actual influence. Scribner sent to ask me to write about her, but I didn't feel up to it, and Fred Myers is to do it.

It is absurd, but I do feel George Eliot's death very much There is nothing to be sorry for—all is at peace for her, poor soul, but it haunts one somehow She was buried in a great storm of wind and rain or I think I should have gone to the funeral

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards the Right Honble Sir Alfred Lyall, G C I E., K.C.B.

*To Emily Ritchie (in India)**March 8th 1881.*

Think of my taking Billy<sup>1</sup> yesterday to see little Tom Carlyle<sup>2</sup>. The little Carlyle baby is very like his Great-uncle. He gave a grunt like him, and Billy opened his eyes and laughed and looked like his Grandfather for a moment. It was the oddest, most affecting moment to me. There were the two babies in the dear old room, and old me looking on at the new, like a shadow in the past. It was strange indeed, and I am sure you will sympathise

The armies of buds are out on every twig. The wind is east, the dust is dry, and yet there is a feeling of intense coming life. Everything out of doors looks so alive that it is quite strange to see no little green leaves and twigs bursting out on the furniture and wicker blinds

*Journal 1882*

Early in the year Mrs Darwin asked us to go and stay at Down, and so anxious was I to go, that I mistook the day, and went just a week before they asked us<sup>1</sup>.

We drove to the door, the butler hospitably said, "Mr and Mrs Darwin are sure to wish you to remain pray don't go," and Mrs and Mr. Darwin came out and called us in, and Mr. Darwin said, "You're as welcome as can be, and you must forgive me for laughing I can't for the life of me help laughing."

There never was a more charming visit, nor a more delightful host and hostess. He told us about his travels with Admiral FitzRoy, he told us about birds, he told us about fishes, he told us about the tortoises in the Island of Ascension, hatched from the eggs in the sand and starting off and plunging into

<sup>1</sup> Her son aged one year.

<sup>2</sup> Grandson of Alexander Carlyle, a brother of Thomas Carlyle, who farmed at Craigenputtock when Carlyle and his wife lived there.

the sea, and, "by Jove," says he, "the little tortoises, without compass or experience, sail straight by the nearest way to Algiers It's perfectly wonderful" Then he announced he should go to rest "These ladies" he said, "are good enough to carry me off and read me to sleep when they think I'm getting over excited"

At breakfast he appeared, having breakfasted, and sat in an arm-chair and talked about Madame de Sevigne He said when they were all young, they knew her letters so well that they nicknamed their friends by the names of her characters, the obliging Haqueville and so on

We walked in the garden, and he showed us his worms which had just been turned out of the study, after a course of French horn

After we came home, there arrived a present for the children from him, a long sliding board to be leant against the stairs, and up and down which the children slide with delight.

The day we should have really gone he was taken with his fatal illness These two happy days were the last bright flash of that glorious life



*Hester wishes to go out again*

*To Mrs. Gerald Ritchie<sup>1</sup> (in India)*27, Young Street  
[1882]

Yesterday I went with Richmond to the London Library, and while I was waiting an old clerk came up and said "I haven't seen you for a long time Ma'am I used to serve your father Why I can see him now standing there and asking for his books It is now some years since he died" "It is twenty years," I said, and there my father was somehow for me, just as though twenty years were nothing, and it is your whole life

I don't know why, but this gives me a feeling of the nothing of time, of the everything of God's love made manifest in those we love

*To Mrs. Legard (who had sent two poems by her granddaughter, Mary Cholmondeley, to be criticised)*27, Young Street  
[1883]

I have been so much interested in the poems, especially the *Little Child*. Perhaps the second one is more like other people's, but they are both very tenderly written, and the longer poem seems altogether true and heartfelt and real. I remember my father criticising my first article, and telling me to "clinch it tighter," and also that I had used the word "*little*" too often, and it seems to me this criticism would also apply to your granddaughter's work. Just the beginning of the *Little Child* strikes me as too diffuse, as if three verses would be better than four. I wonder whether in that sort of stunned state people actually *watch*? it seems to me as if they knew what is happening, and look on but don't look at

Do ask her to send me some more some day, and do tell her to go on writing.

<sup>1</sup> Margie Thackeray, now Mrs. Gerald Ritchie.

*To Mary Cholmondeley*27, Young Street  
[1883].

I have been reading your story, which is very striking and well written, but wouldn't it be improved by a little chastening?

I remember when I was your age, my father told me and it really was a pang to me, to cut out all the "jollys" and all the slang, and I think your hero would seem more romantic and handsome if he didn't talk quite so colloquially. You won't think me quite horrid I know for wanting you to take all this trouble, and if you would then send the packet back to me, I would try at all events, sending it to Mr. Locker

*To Emily Ritchie (in India)*

[May 1883.]

Tonight we went off to Mrs Oliphant's to tea, cream, Scotch bread. She was so kind and I see a great deal of her

I have been reading her article<sup>1</sup> which is capital, the only thing I don't agree with her about, is her estimate of Carlyle and his notes. She calls them "silly," to me it seems so inexpressibly affecting that he, the old grumbling cynic should have been so overpowered by love and remorse, that he takes the whole world into his confidence, and I can't help feeling as if in some mysterious way his work wasn't over, and that a thousand people will be happier for knowing how unhappy those two "noble souls" were, and what Bogies they had to fight

. . I am feeling fairly well again, and a little less like the wolf's grandmother. The children were so dear yesterday and Madame Goldschmidt<sup>2</sup> came, and

<sup>1</sup> Article on "The Letters of Jane Welsh Carlyle prepared for publication by Thomas Carlyle"

<sup>2</sup> Jenny Lind

is another of the divine old women by whom we are surrounded They at least remain to us

Goodnight my dear *young* woman,

*To Rhoda Broughton*

4. Holborn Street. Hampstead

[July 9, 1883]

We were very much disappointed, and so were your friends and admirers who were hoping to meet you, one especially, Mrs Williams-Freeman from Paris, who is a very old friend of mine—but it could not be helped—and I for one, always feel it a jar when people ignore natural feeling, and I never can get over it in them.<sup>1</sup>

The one person who will have rejoiced is young Mr Drummond whom we had asked to meet you, and who was in despair at having to go off to Oxford.

The following messages were confided to me spontaneously

Charlie Brookfield	Love
Cecil Spring-Rice	
Frank Dicey	
Mr. Morison	
Du Maurier	Real regret.
Beerbohm Tree	
Gussie Freshfield	
Richmond	
Ella Freeman	
Lady Temple	Much more regret still.
Mr Warr	

Your room was all ready and a neat dressing-room for your maid, for the Baroness's<sup>2</sup> hospitality is as liberal as it is kind. Goodbye, and oh how I hope some other time you will be able to keep your promise to come and see us all

<sup>1</sup> Rhoda Broughton had put off her visit to my parents owing to the death of a friend.

<sup>2</sup> Lady Mary von Hugel The von Hugels had lent my parents their house at Hampstead

*To George M. Smith*

[1883]

Will you allow me to introduce to you Mrs Herbert Martin, whose aunt Mrs Barbauld<sup>1</sup> we all know I only spiritually know Mrs Martin through a pretty novel of hers called *Bonnie Lesley*, and as she knows you also spiritually, as most writers do, she is very anxious to see you, or to write to you, and please therefore, for my sake and Mrs Barbauld's forgive me for again coming to trouble you

I am absorbed in Carlyle which does somehow make one forgive a great deal that made one angry. It is overwhelmingly interesting to me, and now I seem to know all the insides of the outsides, with which our childhood was passed, though at the same time I almost feel ashamed to know so much Mrs. Carlyle was always our friend I remember her telling me once, how nearly she had gone mad at one time—No wonder!

*To George M. Smith*

Lynton, North Devon, September 1 [1883]

Since I saw you, as I was crossing Lynton moor in a storm, with the children tucked up on my knees, and the wind whirling, I thought of Macbeth's Three Witches, and then it suddenly occurred to me, that my new book ought to be called

*A Book of Sibyls**by**Mrs Richmond Ritchie*

and this would obviate the danger of anyone thinking they had already read *Four Old Friends*, and not sending for it in consequence. It would also give a sort of point to my volume, for the Sibyls were certainly authoresses

<sup>1</sup> Mrs Barbauld died in 1825, my mother gives an account of her life in *A Book of Sibyls*

I hope you will approve of my change, and will excuse the trouble of rechristening

We are expecting Richmond next Saturday, and a storm tomorrow, so I do hope Lizzie has crossed already, if she was ever able to arrange for her journey to Ethel, and my love to her

To return to my Sibylline metaphor, I am rather in the condition of the Sibyl myself, coming with my small shreds of literature and large demands

I am writing with the sea roaring and the white breakers The Cornishes are in their nest on the hillside, and the Freshfields sliding down the cliff towards the sea. I wish you were coming for a walk over Exmoor with us.

*To Mrs Gerald Ritchie (in India)*

[1884.]

Can you think of anything but the War?<sup>1</sup> it seems so near and so far that our soldiers seem like companions and friends, though I am thankful I don't know one of them Did Pinkie<sup>2</sup> tell you that strange little affair in the Abbey? the Bishop of London announcing Gordon's safety from the pulpit, Gladstone in a pew starting to his feet, people all swaying with excitement. Afterwards the *Dean* owning to having told the Bishop, he had heard it from a *Canon*, the Canon had heard it from a couple of choristers, and all the people came bursting into the vestry to know about it, and of course it was only the boys.

We had an amusing, interesting dinner at the Tennants'. Do you remember Captain Speedy? He came up to Richmond and said, "Are you any relation of some most charming young ladies of your name I knew at Freshwater once Can you tell me anything of them, are they married?" then he went on, "and Miss Thackeray, can you tell me about her, whom

<sup>1</sup> General Gordon besieged at Khartoum.

<sup>2</sup> My mother's sister-in-law Emily Ritchie

did she marry?" So Richmond was also able to inform him, and then he crossed the room to me and began asking after you and Annie I am more Jellyby than ever now, for *Mrs Dymond* is coming out in March or April, and I had a regular stage fright last week I got so frightened, I don't know of what exactly, except that it seems so dull, however cheques are never dull

*To Mrs Warre-Cornish*

364, Rosary Gardens  
[1885]

What a kind Beloved you are, to think of me so tenderly, and to write such a cordial anti-sciatic, anti-bluedevilic prescription I feel so wonderfully better after today's blessed burst of sunshine (which you promised me) that I must send you my love and thanks Dearest, I'm reduced to much too abject a state of cowardice by sciatica to fly off even to you and your sweet and classic groves, but to-day anything seems possible in time, and there is a moon shining over Rosary Gardens with healing in every beam

Richmond is smoking a cigar and I am for the first time for all these weeks *sitting* comfortably in a chair, writing notes like a human being

*To Gerald Ritchie*

Southmead,  
Wimbledon Park  
[1885]

This page is to tell how I enjoyed getting both your letters, the first in the throes of composition, the second in the less profitable throes of sciatica, which I am joyfully abandoning for the first time

How we all hope you will keep your palace on the Ganges, Richmond thrilled when you described unpacking your golf sticks He has just come in,

he says "Je me rends au bureau . . . par un léger détour,"—He is going to have a game of golf as I needn't tell you, although the fate of India is in the balance

If I had my way no country should belong to any other country. I would have a republic of the world, and a white-haired administrative President, a sort of wise man like Henry Taylor to refer to in cases of difficulty. I should if war was absolutely necessary only send people over sixty, or hopelessly ill or out of their minds to fight, but with my plan there never would be any fighting. This is a dismal sort of joke

Did I tell you of my meeting with John Bright and how kind he was, and how delightfully he talked of my father?

*To her Husband*

[1885]

. . . I do feel so lazy, and as if I couldn't settle down to writing. I see I shouldn't at all like a comfortable country life. The only thing which would make a country life endurable would be poverty or an absolute necessity for stirring one's torpors

A very nice man we went to dine with on Monday suddenly asked me, which was most necessary in the country—a good digestion or an absorbing occupation? He was a barrister who lived in London. He has bought a farm here, and brought his children and a wife all over red plaid ribbons to live in it. He occasionally writes for the *Pall Mall Gazette*, he has the occupation and not the digestion, and is wretched I believe, but nevertheless much nicer than many happier men

*To Mrs. Gerald Ritchie (in India)*

[1885]

. . . I like to think that death doesn't so much matter, that one goes on loving and understanding the dead just as one does the living, and that long

after one is gone one will still be alive in the hearts of those one loves, and come back at times with a strange sympathy

How different lives are My father never lost anyone by death, except his one little daughter whom he never could speak of without tears, and when I was thirty eight I had lost everyone except you two, Leslie and Richmond, and now at forty eight I have home and children and family and blessings innumerable, but I never leave off thinking of the past

*To George M Smith*

Southmead  
Jan 1st, 1886.

As I was going downstairs last night, the front door burst open with a blast of snowy wind, an icicle man all over frost and snow stood with a gift in his hand, and as I carried off the parcel and opened it by the drawing-room fire we all cried "Oh!" in chorus, when the most lovely kindest couleur de Rosest New Year's token came out of the packing case

May your New Year be as shining, crystallized, delightful, ornamental and delicious as you have made our opening day

The children were in bed but not asleep, and Richmond who had just come home was warming himself by the nursery fire I needn't tell you that Hester and Billy instantly sprang from their beds when I appeared the messenger of sweetness and delight The bonbon tongs had an immense success, the bonbons are an immenser, and Hester says those red ones are "the most deliciousest things she ever ate"

*To Emily Ritchie*

[January 1886]

It is still so bitter that I want to put off coming for a day or two more, unless indeed it cheers up to-

morrow Blanche came this evening, and although it was my Thursday at home, I spent a long delightful afternoon with Mrs Kemble, who sends you many messages

I should not have survived the snow wedding<sup>1</sup> and the confusion and the crowds yesterday, if it had not been for Pen Browning and Henry James, who nobly devoted themselves to extricating me from under the horse's feet, and to finding my deaf and dumb flyman

Sir Millais was very touching at the top of the staircase, full of gorgeous beings He was half crying and shaking one's hand nearly off "These are the things which shorten one's life," he said "You don't know what she has been to me"

*To Emily Ritchie*

Ramsgate  
[July 1886].

I have just been reading Edith Sichel's delightful letter to Richmond She is a living fountain of sparkling ink. She brings it all out in the most delightful abundant way What a contrast to the reluctant scratches of the worn-out professional

But thanks to Ramsgate there is no knowing what revivals may not be in store

Richmond walked from Deal to Dover yesterday by the cliffs, and I (no less enterprising) walked down to the port and back, to see him off without an ache. This is the first time I have walked out without any pain at all, and how I did enjoy it The wind blew, six vulgar delightful steamers started off on their different ways, the sun, the shrimpers, the conjurors, the revivalist all came out on the sands.

I am quite cured of my lameness and delighting in my legs, the most perfect invention that ever was for getting about.

<sup>1</sup> The marriage of Alice Millais to Charles Stuart-Wortley.

I could swear and declare that one of Phil Norman's pictures of old Inns, is here in the town

*To Emily Ritchie*

Southmead  
[1886]

I went up to see Mrs Kemble yesterday, there was a lovely Miss Dorothy Deane there who stopped on and on, till at last in despair I arose to go, when Mrs Kemble said, "Do stay," and to Miss Deane, "My dear, I want you to go"

Among other things Mrs Kemble spoke of old age and its terrors—then quoted, "Courage!" he said and pointed toward the land," and her eyes filled up with gallant tears

. . . Last night we dined at Leslie and Julia's,<sup>1</sup> there was a lovely little Symonds there, and Stella and Mr Ford and Robert Browning and Fred Gibbs I felt as sad and strange as I always do at first, but I made a push and got happy and joking with Henry James, who devotedly jumped into the cab with us, and drove back half-way to Putney, for the sake of a little more talk

Robert Browning described his daughter-in-law so warmly and happily, and also a correspondence he had had with little Alfred Browning Stanley Tennyson Being his Godfather he sent him a present and a letter at Christmas, saying, "You have three names One is a good name, one is a glorious name, one is an affectionate name," and Alfred wrote back and said, "Thank you for the present, but your name is not only affectionate, it is a little glorious too, like mine."

*To her Husband*

Aix-les-Bains<sup>2</sup>  
[1886]

The Terrace with little tin tables, birds and shimmer. The Lake is so heaven blue and the sky

<sup>1</sup> Leslie Stephen married Mrs Herbert Duckworth in 1878.

<sup>2</sup> My mother had been sent to Aix, as a cure for sciatica

so lake clear, and the vines seem to dance in rings with garlands of green and gold, and the little town glitters all day long in the sunshine

Your letter comes quite early of a morning and it is so nice to get I shall have no end of things to tell you about Aix as soon as I can shake off my heavy head I went to Mrs Kemble yesterday and then retired to my couch again, but my head-ache is really going to-day and I enjoyed my breakfast Marie the chambermaid, brought me a delicious little roll, I should think it must be one of Princess Louise's. She is on the 1st floor and so is Mrs Higford Burr I see great bouquets like teetotums all down the passage, which I suppose are tributes to H R H.

I am glad I didn't go to Miss Smith's hotel, where Mrs. Kemble is installed It is like Ramsgate under the trees there, all crowded with bustles and elegancies at little tables Ramsgate with a difference I was much pleased with the way the hotel-keeper deeply bowed to me, as I went by in my Paris dress. I found Mrs Kemble at last, lunching, and she looked sad, but she beamed up and was eighteen all of a sudden. First, however, she blew up the waiter, "Qu'est-ce donc mon ami?" "It is a puddinge english, Madame" "I *detest* English cookery, and pray why do you speak to me in English and bring me this detestable thing? Is not my French good enough to exempt me from nursery pudding?"

She has a beautiful apartment, a very grand salon with blue silk curtains, and she came like an old dear on purpose to see me.

. . . Dr. Blanc has procured an honorary invitation to the cercle for "Mme. Ritchie, femme de lettres." He has five daughters and a country home to which Madame Blanc is to drive me He retired to Brighton for six weeks to learn English! Goodbye, there are only twenty-seven days more of my cure left.

*To her Husband*Aix-les-Bains  
[1886]

. Princess Louise sent for me and took me a couple of drives. The Hotel was much interested. One drive was in a little carriage with a lady in waiting on the back seat.

The Princess very handsome, very *quaint* and certainly very charming "Allons! houp! houp!" she said to the coachman when he got sleepy. She drove me along a dusty road to a little farm where she got out "They don't know who I am. I often come and see the old woman." We went into a low kitchen where the table was spread for supper. An old woman was stirring potatoes over the fire in the big fire-place "I'll stir the potatoes," said the Princess "You can go to your business" "Very well I'll finish laying the supper," said the old woman.

Then the carts laden with Indian corn passed the windows and the twilight began to fall, and there was a sound of distant thunder. A little boy came in from the fields carrying a kitten. The Princess left off stirring potatoes, and began to play with the kitten. The old woman lit the lamp, and her son came in and looked at the table hungrily but the Princess took no notice. The lady-in-waiting saw that they wanted to begin supper, the Princess got up to go "Goodbye—au revoir" she said nodding.

I thought to myself this is a fairy tale, a real cottage, and a real Princess stirring potatoes and *me* looking on.

*To her Husband*Aix-les-Bains  
[1886].

I can hardly write for listening to the French people "Dites-moi, Monsieur, avez-vous vu un livre qui est publié dernièrement, Lettres d'une Inconnue?"

"Non, pas lettres d'une inconnue—*Lettres à une Inconnue*" "Ah! mon Dieu, ça doit être bien ancien, je ne connais pas, mais enfin ça ne peut pas être bien intéressant!" "En effet c'est un livre bien fade". . Now they are talking of a remarkable lady who managed Normandy and who received emperors in her mansarde Now the young man with the curly moustache is saying that his grandpapa knew George Sand, and that every ten years there is a prize of 20,000 francs, which Thiers, Guizot and his grandpapa had in turn, and that his grandpapa tried hard to get the prize for her. My gracious, who can the handsome old man be. George Sand used to write to him, he says, in a bold, round hand, and ask for . . .

Here came old Lady Frances prepared for conversation, and then came Lady Somers, who wishes us to go and see her on Tuesday after you have come, and now I am going to Dr. Blanc and then to my heiress, such a nice heiress with a prancing carriage, who is prepared to be ever so kind. Aide was very serious about my calling, very *earnest* I went and found a tenor, a bouquet, a cup of enamelled tea. This kind Miss Fleetwood Wilson and her lady-in-waiting are at the Hotel de l'Europe, which is quite different from anything else in Aix, a sort of news-market I do hope they won't all go away before you come

Mrs. Higford Burr and I went for a delightful little expedition yesterday in the steamer, round the lake to Hautecombe, where the Kings of Savoy are buried, a delightful old Cistercian Monastery on the rock. We wound up a steep hill like pilgrims after leaving the steamer, two and two, under the pretty oak and plane-tree avenue, past the beggars and the vineyards, and then came the monastery, and the brown monk at the door and the magpie Carthusian just inside the gate, who took us round a sort of

plaster-of-Paris Chapel, with cheap plaster-of-Paris casts of kings and queens and sugar-candy ornaments  
The real part was the old priest and the monk and the lovely hill by the lake.

An Anglican clergyman was immensely taken with it all, and came back and bowed a great deal and walked off with a couple of brothers A nice old monk stepped up to me with such a chaplet I shall bring it back for you There was a marvellous plaster-of-Paris lady on board, "The Tinted Venus" for anything I know, who bought another rosary rather to my confusion

*To her Husband*

Aix-les-Bains  
[1886]

. . . I took the train to Annecy yesterday, and travelled with a nice jolly man and his mother, who kept calling him, "mon fils" with such pride, that I tried to bring in "mon fils" too, but I couldn't think how. The jolly man settled all my trains for me, and lent me his Guide Joanne, and I was able to follow Sainte Chantal from convent to convent, and to catch the Annecy steamer too

The old Annecy is a lovely mediæval town in this style, a castle, arches, rushing water, spires and the ghosts of Jean Jacques and St. Francis exorcizing one another

I took a little carriage and drove from corpse to corpse, and convent to convent All the nuns are exactly like George Gretton in appearance, and laugh with bright brown eyes I got into a regular old tumbled-down 1600 quarter, and was lighted down into a black cellar under an old house, escorted by an old woman in rags and a young man in shirt-sleeves who left his workshop I thought as I went down and down that it was just possible I might be murdered and buried away, but they had such nice

friendly faces, I felt sure they only wanted their fifty centimes. But to my disgust, this wasn't the right place after all, it was only to show me the hole where a body had been found. It was only just before the steamer left that I discovered the right place. See my forthcoming immortal work<sup>1</sup>

Last night I read some more Trollope and a stupid, stupid novel by George Sand which she wrote in a week, I wish I could write one by Tuesday when I start home

*To Alfred, Lord Tennyson*

Southmead  
Dec 15th [1886]

Thank you so much for my book.<sup>2</sup> Pinkie got hers, and one came for Mrs Brookfield, and reasonably and unreasonably I went hunting about saying, "Where is mine? I want my own," and sure enough in the evening it came, and I began—no not began—I went on reading out of the book that I have read and loved all my life, and who knows perhaps, when we are all peacefully together again, (and I always think of old days on Freshwater downs as the nearest thing to heaven I ever could imagine), you will still walk ahead and point to the sea and to the sky, and touch things and make them shine for us and flash into our hearts, as you have ever done

. . . I think the line I like best in the whole book is "Sent the shadow of *Himself, the boundless,* thro' the human soul"

When I think of the past, of the companions so dear, of my father, (whom I have now caught up in life,) of the glorious reality of goodness and generosity in which they lived and had their being, the wings seem to come to your noble thought, and all

<sup>1</sup> *Sainte Jeanne de Chantal*, an article which was republished by my mother in her book *From the Porch*.

<sup>2</sup> *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*.

that has been, and will still be, grows calm and simple and wide once more.

I am writing also to send you all our *loyal thanks* as you said once, when you telegraphed to Osborne I, who am a republican, prefer to elect my own Kings and Queens and I need not tell you their names

My letter is too incoherent almost to send, but I do send it with more love and more thanks, and I'm ever your and dearest Lady Farringford's loving

A I R

*To Mrs. Kemble*

Southmead

[March 24th 1887]

I have it on my mind, that I told you the dream all wrong It was Joachim, who dreamt that he was in a lovely Claude Lorraine landscape, that Mozart lay under a tree while Raphael stood up in his black velvet cap, and plucked fruit from the tree which he gave Mozart That was something like a dream and worth repeating to you

Are you more easy, dearest neighbour? I tried to walk up the hill after leaving you, but a whole flood of spring rain came in my way, and now we are in the clouds but such soft and delicious clouds . . .

*To Emily Ritchie*

Southmead

[1887]

. . . Yesterday, feeling a longing for some calm air without any trouble, we started, the children and I, Monsieur Georges and three Stracheys. We got to Putney Bridge for 7d., and got tickets for 2d. for each child, and 4d for "adults," and started economically and triumphantly on board the *Wedding Ring* for Kew—"Singulier nom," says M. Georges Presently after half-an-hour we stuck in the mud, and

there we stuck and we stuck and we stuck, and the other steamers went by roaring with laughter, and finally the tide came in and bobbed us to the landing after nearly three hours I sternly resisted the children's entreaties to go back by water It was then past six o'clock, and as we sped along in the train, we actually saw our steamer again stuck in the mud!

There was a glorious deep angry sunset in the west, resulting only in this dusty fusty East wind and uninspiring morning

Richmond brought such an interesting person home to dine last night, Mr Middleton, the Slade Professor at Cambridge, who told me to go to the South Kensington Museum and ask to see Ruskin's portfolios He says they are absolutely perfect in their way, and that people have not said nearly enough of his gifts as an artist I had a funny little tea-party on Sunday, General Strachey, Sir J Strachey and Mrs Shaen who conversed agreeably, but I have been so stupid these three days that man delighteth me not, nor woman either, only children Bless them.

*To Mrs G F. Watts*

Aldeburgh  
Oct 7 [1887].

How am I to thank you both? They write from home that the picture<sup>1</sup> has come, with such pride and delight that I am quite touched Richmond is radiant I feel that you have made me a free citizen of that noble Signorland, and I can't thank you, so I look gratefully at your two photographs, which are on the chimney fronting the sea full of boats and herrings The sun has actually come out after three weeks, to sympathise with my elation and my gratitude, and thank you with all my heart

We have been here three weeks and I have lost the headache which persecuted me for three weeks

<sup>1</sup> Her portrait given to her by Watts, who was known to his friend as *Signor*.

before we came, and I feel as if each whish of the waves washed up one's soul How I trust your journey will do you as much good The children are intensely happy with two little friends, less adventurous and not quite in such tatters as themselves, but equally appreciative Mr Garrett is the host here, or rather the Mayor of Aldeburgh, and Mrs Garrett-Anderson has the prettiest little cottage that ever was seen. The larks are singing for the fine day, over such lovely gorse and bracken commons, and little robins are hopping all about the hedges, and thank you, thank you from your delighted and affectionate,

A I R

*To Emily Ritchie*Aldeburgh  
[1887]

I have just had such a funny mysterious little expedition in the dark, first to post a letter, second to find out the omnibus to call at 8.30 to-morrow for Richmond

A Pickwick Inn and Bar, a dark stable yard, a Sam Weller with a lantern, and home by the sea walk, with the sailors talking together in the blackness, and then a little home interior, a lamp, the children peacefully at cards, and Estelle stitching,—finally my room, my lamp, the fire lighting up the little square den and the sea washing and washing I was never so near it, and never liked it so well, it is not much farther off than the ivy bank along the terrace at Southmead

I'm gradually getting calmer and calmer like the lady of Parma, but one doesn't go off in fireworks here as in Scotland It's been a hideous day, we had the pony carriage and Richmond didn't go golfing this morning, and we went up to a firwood and walked through the pines and met the pony and drove another bit and walked another bit It's so like Freshwater,

birds and sea and haycocks and ships sailing into the tree tops, I do like it more and more.

. Oh, how happy the children are! They have found a live crab and a live starfish, they have made up a scenery of rocks and seaweed in a basin on the floor What do starfish like to eat? Pray telegraph if you happen to know

. . . Tomorrow I am going to see my new friend, Mr Barham the fishmonger He is so nice, simple, well-bred He is a gentleman but couldn't get on, and took to a boat, and Mr FitzGerald helped him to start I am going there to-day for Mr. Aldis Wright, to see some of the letters, E F G used to write to him It seems such a pity to leave out all that part of Mr FitzGerald's life from the memoir.

*To Mrs. Kemble*

Aldeburgh  
[1887]

I am more provoked than ever that I could not come and see you before we left. I hear from Pinkie of your abominable intruders<sup>1</sup>—brutes, pirates—invective is thrown away upon such wretches I could have done nothing but I might at least have sympathized with you, but I can't *bear* to think of what you must have had to go through and it seems so horrid not to have come to you, dear Only I am thankful you had Miss Cobbe<sup>2</sup>

I haven't been well, but this delicious bracing air has done me worlds of good. We are in a charming little untidy house by the edge of the sea, which washes and hushes and throbs all day long at our door. The children dance in and out of the ocean (and so do their clothes) I potter about and make friends with the neighbours

Miss Lynn is a most delightful and accomplished old lady, she used to play with Mr FitzGerald on the

<sup>1</sup> Burglars.

<sup>2</sup> Frances Power Cobbe

beach here as a child, and saw more of him latterly than most people

She knows *all* about you and me and old days—it is so strange to meet a stranger so completely at home with one's own past life

A nice woman, Miss Annie Kerrich, his favourite niece, is also here. She is curiously like E F G, as like as a soft little woman can be, with round eyes, but without that dimple I always remember

They tell me that it was not a fact that Mrs Fitz-Gerald forced him to marry her. She urged him to break it off, but he from some sense of honour would go on with it, and it was more than he could bear. He left some letters to this niece evidently wishing that the truth should be known. Miss Lynn said he would never come in to see her, that he used to sit outside the window till she became so rheumatic, she said to him, "You really *must* do an act of charity and come inside, I can no longer sit at the open window talking," and then he came, and she used to read to him, and he used to laugh and laugh and be more delightful than ever.

*To Gerald Ritchie (in India)*

Aldeburgh  
[1887].

Did I ever tell you I have given up meat for two years? it is inconvenient here, where all the fish rush pell-mell to the train and take tickets for London straight out of the sea

But I *have* a fisherman, the dearest of men, who comes to my help. I have just ordered two shillings worth of poetry for him! He is handsome, charming, a gentleman by birth, he keeps himself by his fish-shop and Mr FitzGerald gave him his boat. We take little walks together and he carries his shrimps and talks quite enchantingly. I really must make him into a story to the accompaniment of the wind, waves and wild common.

This has been a capital place, very health-giving,  
I came a wreck and am going back with a new jib  
boom, new sails and a new rudder.

*To Mrs. Gerald Ritchie (in Index)*

Southmead  
[1888]

I have had a most delightful ten days without headache, coming and going just like anybody else I can't believe it I have dined at Mr Gosse's, and been to the New Gallery where Hester's portrait looks charming in the chalk, and I had the pride of leading up the du Mauriers and your Uncle Eyre to see my daughter's picture Theo's portrait shall appear next and when you bring her home we must get Lisa to take her, "copy her" as Billy calls it

I had been writing to your Uncle Eyre<sup>1</sup> in vain about the MS of *Esmond*, which we have given to the Trinity library at Cambridge and of which they wanted the history He and I wrote the end at Papa's dictation I was about fifteen and it's so long ago I can hardly remember it, except I do remember writing about Beatrix's silk stockings as she came downstairs to meet Esmond

At the New Gallery there is a very fine picture of Burne-Jones' "Perseus and the Dragon" which Mr Richmond was looking at, but I couldn't help wishing he could have had better snakes to paint from Perseus and the lady are nobly painted, but the snake is all in scallops. Mrs. Stillman and Effie were the two prettiest people there, and so beautifully dressed. Gladstone was there, very very pale and thin and vigorous, going the rounds with Charlie Hallé, Mrs Maxse and Watts who says. "Humph! Robert Elsmere is a polemical work calculated to influence the age" I began by lunching with Mrs. Brookfield When I see her I feel just as I used to do when I was a little girl, and always felt it such a treat

<sup>1</sup> Eyre Crowe, A.R.A

to go to her, then I get maddened and achy to think  
she is to have no rest, no quiet, no peace ever again  
Dear beloved soul, she has got the wrong end of life.  
After all, many have a much miserabler life and it's  
no use fussing because she won't make herself com-  
fortable *my way* instead of her own

I have got another party this afternoon—Mrs Emerson Forbes, Emerson's daughter, Miss Souvestre, Mrs Cunliffe We are expecting the Chapmans on Wednesday I have had such a touching letter this morning from Mrs Matt Arnold, I am so glad I wrote to her, and so farewell

*To Mrs. Gerald Ritchie (in India)*

Mount Pleasant  
West Malvern  
Sept 13th [1888].

We have had such a golden week since I last wrote  
Our little mouse-trap opens out upon the moor and  
the moon rises and the sun sets on every colour of  
the rainbow, and the cities and cathedrals are scattered  
about the plains and the heavens, and the crows come  
over the crests of the hills and our spirits rise upon  
the wing

You will hardly believe that I have been walking  
and scrambling about and catching trains and coaches  
all this fortnight to my heart's content.

We must come here when you come back It is  
the merriest and most untiring place

I send you the enclosed letters which will amuse  
you It will be somewhat difficult for me to talk over  
old days with my correspondent, as it was her sister  
and Richmond's brother who used to meet!

*To Mrs. Gerald Ritchie (in India)*

Brighton  
[1888]

Here is your birthday again, and I send you a hug  
to-night, with the sea roaring and the children sub-

sided I read your letter to-day and I could have cried to think you sometimes feel so far away, but one thing you need never feel, that you don't live and talk and *be* here just as much as if you were

What with headaches and my articles I loathe writing and yet I do so enjoy getting letters, and I write a great many in my head to you Real letters are so scrappy and just tell about five minutes and all the rest one has to guess However one can guess fortunately and that just makes the whole difference.

. It's no use pretending there are no hard things in life along with all its blessings—but as soon as we have docketted one ache it seems to begin to change into some other.

I had a tea-party to-day, Marie Stillman and the dear old Simons and the Black Sheep, but now snowy—

There is a most charming little photograph coming out to you, which Henry Cameron has done of Billy, only Billy is always laughing and this looks unnaturally grave We must take Theo to him when you come home Lion, the little dog, cocks up his ears and doesn't breathe when the camera is opened, and Henry becomes the image of his mother and even sticks his foot out in the same way, and Ellen still in that old black bonnet and fusty cocks of hair comes out of the dark room But he has taken a partner and is really getting on

All Brighton is at lunch, I have had my chicken (Do you know that I subsist upon fish and chicken, and have done so for three years?) Billy, I'm sorry to say, having thrown his spoon across the table into Hester's face, is left to draw horses by himself, while Hester and I retire to the school-room, a delightful sunny room with three windows and a thousand miles of sea

*To Emily Ritchie*

[1888]

Your card came, and your delightful last letter, which seems to me very comforting about Blanche. One can't hope for perfection of health and spirits, but if one is fairly content with a certain amount of imperfection, one can get on and accept the life God sends one.

I wonder if it is the Devil who makes one ill, and how is it one is able to get through the troubles of life and make the best of it? That must be the secret of Providence which is hidden in the heart of things and feelings, as well as in the light of the hills.

*To Mrs. Gerald Ritchie (in India)*Kingsley Lodge  
Wimbledon  
[1889]

I wonder if anyone has turned up for you in your solitude? I do hope so—anyhow things turn up, oneself turns up, and one has no idea of the unexpected corners one has, until one's been alone a little.

I am becoming a second Miss Clare (did you ever hear of her?) The garden is a real delight to me I prowl round counting my weeds and shoots, and nailing up the ivy.

Last night I enjoyed myself immensely at the Richmonds'—Marie Stillman and Mrs Morris sat in that wicker bower, Henry James was there and the Andrew Langs who told me, of all people in the world, that Becky Sharp is still alive, at least Miss Tizzy Revis who was supposed to be Becky is, and she is now no less a person than the Countess de la Torre, and her cats one reads of in the police courts.

We have seen a good many people one way and another, Lady Airlie and Mrs Kemble have been to tea, and Mrs. Wister from America, to whom I suddenly lost my heart.

*To Miss Browning*

Kingsley Lodge  
Wimbledon  
*December 16th [1879]*

How blind I was to the gravity of the bad news<sup>1</sup> I couldn't believe it somehow, and when I wrote to you, I seemed alas! so convinced that what I had read was exaggerated, and that such vigour and might as his could not succumb. Now I am beginning to realise the darkness and sorrow which has fallen on you, and yet his noble farewell words<sup>2</sup> are in one's heart—in all our hearts.

I can only thank God for having counted him among those who live in my soul's life, and you too dear friend I love, whom I am grateful and proud to count my friend. And to think of him who is with us all, though gone, is like thinking of the sunshine which survives and warms; and I for one who am so far on in life, feel that before the warmth of this light has ceased for me I shall have reached beyond all aching cold and dark.

. . . I think the only help to one's sorrow is to feel more and more the priceless treasure of those who made one's life what it was, and who still make it. Did this ever apply to anyone more than to Mr Browning? I too do feel what you say, that life and vigour and strength seem so personified in him, that all this<sup>3</sup> seems far away from him. I feel as if we had him still, while the tributes are to his genius and goodness.

You are a Browning, and your courage and steadfastness make me cry. I was stupefied when I lost my sister, and I grudge it now, and feel how near I might have been to her, to the greater life, and I only

<sup>1</sup> The illness of Browning, which resulted in his death.

<sup>2</sup> *Asolando*, Browning's last book, published on the day of his death.

<sup>3</sup> The public mourning for the poet

thought of my own pain, and not of that blessing of love and tender devotion which was and *is* still, I do believe

I only say this to you, for your mention of my sister did go to my heart

Do you remember that day I came with the children, when there were people in every room in the house and you said we must come in all the same, and Mr Browning came in and said, "Well, what can I do for you?" and I told him it was my birthday and I wanted him to give Hester and Billy each a kiss

We have a hundred records of his kindness and of your's too, dear old kind friend, and I send you my old love and am your affectionate,

ANNE RITCHIE

*To Mrs. Gerald Ritchie (in India)*

Friday cum Christmas Day  
[1889]

I have been to the Martins' where I found Mr Froude who was looking very handsome and who was certainly very kind

. . . Then dear old Sir Theodore [Martin] came in, very pale and sad, he is going to be one of the pall bearers at the Abbey<sup>1</sup> on Tuesday and he had just come from the Brownings I was going to de Vere gardens, when I went in to the Martins', for one has a hankering after one's old friends at such times. Poor Miss Browning was ill in bed There was a light in the drawing-room window, and in the ground floor room was the dear old friend's coffin, with its purple pall and the great Italian wreaths spread at its foot I wanted to say goodbye and I dreaded the Abbey.

<sup>1</sup> Browning's funeral

*To G F Watts, R A.*

Wimbledon  
Feb 26th [1890].

Here is my little article—my enormous long article rather—about Ruskin which they have at last published I am grieved to think that he is so ill I needn't alas! have been so afraid of saying anything he might dislike, and how very very kind you both were in helping me

. . . We send you our love and look at all your kind tokens of friendship on our walls—I wish I was hanging up on *your* wall, and could have a talk We are in very fair condition after that winter storm of influenza which raged at Wimbledon It was almost ludicrous to see the people collapsing on every side, and our helpless consternation I had my four maids, my husband, my two children, and the man who cleaned the windows, all laid up at once But everybody is quite well, so it is no use dwelling upon the sneezes of the past .

*To Mrs. Warre-Cornish*

Kingsley Lodge  
[1890].

Pinkie's delightful letter about you all has come this morning, but I must send you my love, before I write to her .

Here am I suddenly overwhelmed by the realization of what letters are to us all I wonder which is more important, flesh and blood or paper and ink in the course of ages? I am reading Lewes's *Life of Goethe*, and a disquisition upon Shakespeare's attitude to his contemporaries first set me off wondering

I suppose *men* are more important than what they feel and say, but only to themselves perhaps . . .

I have just felt like Carlyle himself, for being worked up to a spurt of genuine ink-splashing, in comes Amelia the parlour maid "Mr. Witting from

South Wimbledon particularly wishes to see you," and says I, "How can you bring such messages to me how *can* I see anybody?" I resume ink spouting Enter Amelia carrying *this*,<sup>1</sup> "Mr Witting wishes you to buy this basket for plants, ma'am, he has made it himself." Yes, dearest Blanche, I nearly exploded, all my ideas were crushed by that awful basket, and I'm soothing myself by a note to you I have explained to Amelia that if ever she writes a book, she will find that anybody coming in like that will send all her ideas flying out of window

"Gr-r-r" is the most expressive line Browning ever wrote, and I find myself always quoting it on every possible occasion

*To Emily Ritchie (in Paris)*

[1891]

I have been imagining you in my favourite corner of my favourite city. Have you opened your windows and looked out, does it smell—rumble—taste—Paris? I'm sure it does. Even the little tin water cans are unlike anything anywhere else

. Now I must tell you of Billy's repartee which I think will amuse you

Billy to his Mama, "Tell me a story about when you were very young"

Mama, "I went to see Mr. and Mrs. Browning at Paris, and Mr Aide who was there said to me, 'Well Miss Thackeray and when are you going to write a book?' Mr Browning answered for me, 'All in good time. The Roman ladies sat at home and spun wool Nowadays too, every woman has wool to spin of some sort or other.'"

Billy, "I don't call that a story, Mama, I call that a yarn!"

<sup>1</sup> My mother has drawn a picture of the basket.

*To Emily Ritchie (in Rome)*

Kingsley  
[April 1891]

Your letter came in with a burst of sunshine, so that we nearly had to pull the blinds down. How delicious does your Lucca sound. Mrs Sartoris used to say that of all her favourite spots Lucca was the most favoured I can't remember, but the Storys will tell you, and do ask them from me if they were not there with the Brownings and a whole colony of dear past spirits?

(I can't tell you how I enjoyed a reading of Browning's *Luria* on Easter Sunday. I'm not literateurising now, but isn't the real sacrament of our life when something Godlike raises us for a minute from stuff to spirit? and *Luria* is a noble flash of great spirituality.)

I remember your hotel perfectly, and I went there and either did or didn't leave a large bouquet of rose-buds for George Eliot. It was in my mind to do so, and I bought the flowers and went to the door with them, and then I think my courage failed and it seemed to me affected.

Though I'm not in Italy I can see such a lovely white snowy range of peartree as I write, and my own tulips are sprouting; everything came out like a Private view yesterday with a blessed shower of rain.

*To Emily Ritchie*

Kingsley  
[April 1891].

It seems the wildest Romance to me, that anyone belonging to me should be standing upon the corner-stones of Rome. I think in some former existence I was a Roman matron, such an odd string tugs at me after twenty years and forty years, and a sort of odd feeling of former existence I can't describe. Paris is all my youth, but Rome is some indefinable association

It is dazzling, cold, cheerful, irritating Easter weather here Mrs H—— calmly literary, called the other day, and stayed and stayed, till I rushed off in despair, and found Billy in a grand draught and shirt-sleeves and open window, performing hair-breadth antics and refusing to appear till our company was gone

There is something very ludicrous in discussing whether my father's memoirs should or shouldn't be written, while his grandson is catching influenza in the next room Not that he is He is very jolly and in the seventh heaven with Arthur

*To Rhoda Broughton*

Wimbledon

May 9 [1891]

I knew you would be very indignant with me, but I couldn't resist coming, having suddenly made up my mind to the extravagance of a victoria and a treat to my daughter and her two friends We went to Lady Russell, to your enchanted home which "Cometh up as a flower," which I love "Not wisely" and how do you always secure Dowager Countesses to open your front door and greet your guests? Your Mansfield Terrace really is a triumph of delightfulness

I wound up my expedition with a horrible sad little visit to such a plucky noble old lady, Mrs. Thompson of Trinity, who lives in a dreary roadside villa on the way to Kew, too old to read, all alone after her brilliant reign, and never saying one word of complaint—it is really heroic.

Then we sailed through millions of white blossoms, home by Roehampton Lane But I was disappointed not to see you, for coming earlier I had hoped to catch you and I *didn't mean to bring the little girls in.*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> An allusion to Rhoda Broughton's well-known dislike of children.

Richmond has just come home, in utter scorn of *Hedda Gabler*. Au revoir, you know we are always at luncheon on Sundays at a quarter to two, but it is simply impossible for the carriageless, I know Lady Lindsay said she always had had her eye upon your pretty house when it was to let, and promises to ~~send~~<sup>call</sup> for me, and then I shall try and combine better, and find you as well as your house

*To her Husband*

84, Plymouth Grove  
Manchester  
November 11 [1891]

O what kind ladies '<sup>1</sup>' "  
O what a delicious dinner!  
O what a nice room'  
O how extraordinarily rejuvenated and cheered I feel'

I only wish you were here too, for I feel quite ashamed of having all these delicious little attentions to myself. I am writing to catch the early worm! Meta met me at the station in a beautiful brougham. Pheasant, jelly, Apollinaris for dinner, champagne on the side table It is very funny of what consequence one feels when one is paying a visit The best of everything is not too good for one The sun is shining, the air is delicious! I like the climate of Manchester!!! I arrived far less tired than when I started I do wonder how you and the children are getting on

Sunday 12 o'clock Only just down! Don't know where the ladies are You are an angel to have written again for I was fussy somehow and am thankful to hear all is well.

... I went to see a church yesterday built by Hansom, the most beautiful thing you ever saw.

<sup>1</sup> My mother was staying with Miss Meta and Julia Gaskell, daughters of Mrs Gaskell, the authoress

Julia says that she heard there a very fine sermon on Heaven and Hell, not long ago, but by some nervous slip the preacher always said Hell for Heaven and Heaven for Hell, till it was all she could do to keep her countenance

Then we went to the Town Hall, and saw the beautiful Maddox-Browns The frescoes quite lovely Then we drove on to the canal which was looking like a fresco too, with the sun dropping over the distant waters

To-day there has been a luncheon party, Mr Wilkinson, Prince Kropotkin and others, and an absurd little incident happened Julia said to me, "There is a charming man going to take you in, he is a self-raised philanthropist, a frame-maker, who has done so much for the poor people You will be interested in him," and I being sent in with a little man made myself as agreeable as I could

I What a striking city this is!

He Indeed

I What a magnificent Town Hall!

He Really, I never have been there

I (nervously). How proud you must be of the great work and achievements of Manchester.

He I take no interest in them

I Not in that lovely new church I saw yesterday with Miss Gaskell

He I am an Atheist!

I (still more nervous) And do you care for the great canal?

He Not at all, I am an Anarchist!

I. Good gracious, would you destroy everything?

He Yes, I am a Nihilist!

Mr Wilkinson here burst out laughing—I had mistaken Prince Kropotkin for the self-raised philanthropist!

However after this terrible beginning Prince

Kropotkin and I became great friends, and he gave me a description of Anarchy that was more like Heaven upon earth than anything else, with laws of order peace and beauty enforced by a vast army of Christian-hearted atheists

*To Mrs. Oliphant*

Kingsley,  
July 16 [1891]

I have just written to Madame Villari and told her what I could about you, and this makes me want to touch you yourself

How I have admired your Pilgrim's Progress of a book<sup>1</sup> You have to my mind flashed him into your pages, and I sat up until I don't know what o'clock, and finished with a feeling—thank God, life doesn't depend on sanity or success or fulfillment, it is living towards the best one can which is the secret of it all.

I've so often felt *that*, talking to my mother. There is her loving humble generous life quite clear—through all its incompleteness Suppose she was a strong-minded woman, or a leader of fashion or anything else, what more would she be in the kingdom of heaven?

I never could come and see you, though I longed to . But I often am with you in thought, and always in love and affection, and indeed I don't forget what your courage has to endure.

*To Mrs. Douglas Freshfield*

Littlestone  
Kent  
[August 1891]

If your Browning<sup>2</sup> delays, let me know I will send it off as soon as I have done with it But read Laurence Oliphant first, it seems to me such a striking

<sup>1</sup> *The Life of Laurence Oliphant.*

<sup>2</sup> *The Life and Letters of Robert Browning.*

and cheering biography It shows how true the impulses towards Hope and the Unseen are I don't think anything ever struck me more Laurence Oliphant may be cracked, he may be affected, he may be unsatisfactory, but you feel the genuine true atmosphere through it all, just as you do in the Browning indeed, but then to feel like Browning one has to have something of his vigorous, strong nature Now Laurence Oliphant is made of the same uncertain stuff one is oneself, only he has this beautiful generous aspiration, which carries him on real wings over the sloughs and oceans of life

I can see him very plain in the summer evening, looking up and laughing so courteously and prettily when my father apologised for having forgotten a second time, that he had asked him to dinner

. . . Except Sir Walter Scott's Journal, I can hardly think of anything written at length in detail —which gives a very clear impression to one's mind of another person It seems to me it is the short, natural, by-the-way things, which are most vivid. I am trying to write a column for the *London News*, with a picture of my father which they are publishing —I don't know why—just because the man asked me He wanted me to say what I thought of my father's Biographies, and I began to think that three words of Mr FitzGerald's put him more vividly before me than pages of disquisition "There the door opened and Thackeray came in, grand, gay and white-headed" I know that phase of him so well.

*To Miss Browning*

Littlestone,  
August 18<sup>th</sup> [1891]

I am just sending the last page of my little article<sup>1</sup> to Mr Harper's agent, and asking him to send a proof to you, care of Messrs Smith and Elder.

<sup>1</sup> On *Robert Browning*, republished in *Tennyson, Browning and Ruskin*.

It is only a very slight thing, but a record of a great deal of happy remembrance. It is rather egotistical, as I had to tear up all I tried to write that wasn't personal, for I thought it so dull and my article became only personal reminiscences at last. I hope there is nothing you will object to, and I send you my love, and to Pen and to his dear Mrs Pen, who is always a pleasure to think of, especially with you.

Goodbye dear, I'll never write about anyone I knew and *really* cared for again, for it is so complicated; and yet at the same time it is a very *proud* and grateful feeling to say to oneself, "and *this* was my Friend." I can only say thank God, for having known such dear and noble people.

*To Mrs. Douglas Freshfield*

Litt' estone  
Kent  
[1891]

It seems such a long time since I have heard about you, but as Pinkie is going to see you she will send me word. Mlle. Souvestre wrote very touchingly about you. It was like one of Madame de Sevigne's letters, some of which (when they are not about old Grignan) do somehow seem to me, the most touching and feeling letters that ever were written. Do you remember the very last she ever wrote? I have not read it for years, but it seems to me to concern you, when I think of it.

I wonder if you can tell me anything about Mme. D'Aulnoy? I have promised to write a short preface to her fairy tales, but my head has been so bad, I have had no chance till now. She is a parrot-faced little person, and has written some idiotic travels in Spain. Do you think the British public would allow me to quote the fact of the Dame du Palais, the Princesse des Ursins, escorting the King to bed, carrying a

sword, a lamp and a pot de chambre? I am afraid not, but it is the only fact I have been able to gather as yet

I send you Mr du Maurier's letter to whom I wrote about his two very beautiful opening numbers<sup>1</sup>. They were like Ruskin, or anything akin to one. The story nothing, the description of my and (as I find) his childhood, so extraordinarily vivid

*To Emily Ritchie*

Wimbledon  
[1891]

I had an interesting visit to the British Museum, found a fire, an armchair and a volume of memoirs, and read and read and read as hard as I could, until luncheon and Sidney Colvin appeared. Madame d'Aulnoy<sup>2</sup> is a humbug. A long farrago about her lovers, Vicomtes and Marquis, and their jealousies and her family's unkindness. She sounds exactly like Heloise, not a word of her children, nor her journey nor anything to the point in any way. I have just made such an extraordinary discovery in a footnote, while I was on her track. Madame de la Fayette was a sort of spy!<sup>3</sup> A political secret agent to the Court of Turin. I feel inclined to go off to Italy to read it all up.

We have been reading the *Princesse de Cleves*. Oh how dull it is! What saints of modest toleration were our great great French grandmothers who thrilled so easily.

*To Mrs. Oliphant*

Oct 16 [1892]

I have been wondering about you, ever since we parted at the Abbey door,<sup>3</sup> and I fear from what

<sup>1</sup> *Peter Ibbetson*

<sup>2</sup> An article on Madame d'Aulnoy which my mother was writing

<sup>3</sup> Tennyson's funeral in Westminster Abbey

Miss Lawless tells me to-night that you are very tired and worn out

I came home feeling out of gear and out of spirits, and I am only now shaking off the feeling of almost despair which came over me, as I looked at all that should have been of comfort and help . . It seemed to me like my whole generation passing away I think the great strain of feeling so deeply and of seeing a public sight at the same time is too much, and I will go to no more funerals unless I may cry comfortably by myself and say my prayers, and then comfort does come, and that is all I know

I was really touched by Ellen Terry's genuine grief, tho' I think, if I had only been alone with you, I should have felt in better harmony with that, to me, most wrenching scene

*To A. C. Swinburne*

Kingsley

[December 1892]

Here is a small volume to wish you a happy Christmas. Wish us one with all your might and perhaps you may exorcize the Fiend<sup>1</sup> who has gripped me here, and my beloved husband in London

We are so *longing* to get well for our boy's holidays, he writes by every post, "On the 21st I arrive at Euston Send me the journey money at once. Please be well in time"

I have the greatest faith in a friend's good wishes, yours even if you were not an old friend!

What news have you of Bertram Brooke? I have heard nothing since they left.

I send this to neighbour Frost's

<sup>1</sup> Influenza

*To Emily Lady Tennyson*Kingsley Lodge  
16th Jan [1894]

It was dear of you to write to me and I liked Hallam's note, which I found when we came home from our sad solemn journey<sup>1</sup>

My dearest mother did not suffer, she was speaking of Billy and his school when she fainted

They carried her to her room, and she rallied for a very little, and then became once more unconscious. She did not know me when I got there, but I could sit by her bed and hold her hand, and feel it was her and me still

And in the morning, after that long strange night, something came into her face, something great and wise and beautiful beyond words or even remembrance I thought the sun had broken thro' the clouds, but when I looked at the window it was ~~full~~ twilight, and this great distinct light and beauty was in her face I should like to think the children could feel as little sorrow and as much love, when I go from them and their father They were very sad poor darlings, and cried and cried but they have cheered up now except that to-morrow is black Friday and Billy is going back to school

I will write again very soon for I seem to have so many other things to say, but just now I will only give you a loving hug

*To Lady Bell*Kingsley Lodge  
Wimbledon  
Jan 20th [1894]

Somehow I don't write to you because I am so sure with you, and I know you know how I love you and yours, and what a joy in life it is to be *at home* in the hearts that come natural Just at first after my

<sup>1</sup> Isabella Thackeray died on the 11th of January.

mother died every word I wrote seemed like struggling against a great weight. And yet it has been more of thankfulness than sorrow—she had no pain, and those who saw her die, now know her, and what she was within the tranquil person of her life. Dear Mama, so silent, so undemanding, so loving, so contented. As she lay there, she looked wise and strong and full of peace, and one couldn't feel sorrow, and yet I shall miss her day after day. The children cried bitterly, and her poor friend and companion can't be consoled. I went back and found her sitting all alone in the middle of the room, quite broken and overcome.

*To Mrs. Warre-Cornish*

*January [1894]*

Pinkie will have told you about my mother. Her death was something far beyond peace. It seemed to me like a reality of Life and Knowledge, and her dear face looked translated, supreme. I have ~~one~~ words to tell you how great she seemed to me. Richmond and the children, and Julia and Edward Thackeray came and laid her in her grave—my kind, sweet, patient mother.

XI

1894—1900

*To Emily Ritchie*

15 June [1894]

We are coming home Monday after an absence of many years<sup>1</sup> I find England very little changed, though of course my long residence in Ireland has modified my views O how they hate us—it's awful—simply awful.

Edgeworthstown was exactly what I expected One of Miss Edgeworth's own groups was at the railway station, an emigrant family going to America, and Mrs St George going off fishing She has the most splendid diamonds, although she is nearly starving "Where is Mr St George?" says Mr Edgeworth. "Oh he couldn't be bothered, we are going off for the day" Mr Edgeworth says he had far rather see the French and Americans in Ireland, than the English and Home Rule, so do lots of other people It frightened me They all like Mr. Morley and Lord Houghton.

*To Emily Ritchie*

The End House, Wimbledon  
4 o'clock [June 1894]

You will like to hear that we are triumphantly through the travail of a new home, and the home is born<sup>1/2</sup> A van arrived before breakfast and carried

<sup>1</sup> A fortnight in Ireland, my mother was writing her Introductions to Miss Edgeworth's novels

<sup>2</sup> The End House was built by my parents

off the drawing room. Here sit I in the comfortable chair by the fire, in perfect raptures<sup>1</sup>. To-morrow the remaining dining room and bedrooms follow, and then comes Mr Lee and his hammer and nails. It is more like Rosary Gardens than anything else. It feels quite dry-ish already, and we have been in luck with our van-guard, a magnificent retinue of "Porthoses," with the minds of d'Artagnan and the noble manners of Athos, have brought all the furniture in procession I said yellow room, blue room, green room, as they came in, and that was all

*To Julian Sturgis*

[July 1894.]

Thank you for *your* thank you dear Julian, what a delightful cheering fillip to warm my old and failing steps. I *love* my recollections, and I now understand why everybody writes them. One begins to dance again, and lark, and frisk, and thrill, and do all the things one can hardly believe one ever did. I'm sure some of our happiest joys and carols were under your kind kindest home, and I think of Mount Felix as Mount Happy indeed.

Jealousy of the Miss Whites (and how they detested us, I can't help laughing now when I remember the amenities which passed between us) was the only shadow, but that gave point to the dial.

I think it very likely indeed my father wrote at Mount Felix, but he finished *Esmond* before he went to America the first time, and it was *after that* I think you went to Mount Felix, and we used to come over with the Synges. There was a house at Richmond<sup>1</sup> or somewhere thereabouts we used to drive to, where I once saw Hawthorne who didn't speak and looked grim, and where Howard was an infant running away without any clothes on, but that was more like *Esmond*.

<sup>1</sup> "Little Marble Hill," the Sturgis' country house before they moved to Mount Felix.

times I will try and look it up and tell you, if I can find anything I shall so value the book, another thank you for that

*To Julian Sturgis*

*July 21 [1894]*

Your kind thought of us touched me very much, and when the book<sup>1</sup> came I read it straight off, and thought it so well done, and so sincere a picture of your lovely home and its dear inmates I thought to you—I do hope I wrote what I thought, and felt and feel, but I have a vile way of thinking my letter, beginning it, and long afterwards asking myself if I ever finished it, and ever sent it off?

Whether I did or not, I am very grateful and glad to have this little bit of my own past safely written down and printed by you. I think some hours at Mount Felix were almost the happiest of all my life—I can breathe it back still, the fresh mornings, the delightful five o'clocks; and I can see your father so plainly, so handsome, so upright Once we went with him on the four-in-hand, I think the only time I ever was so majestically placed in all my remembrance Thank you again, if I have not thanked you already, and believe me always,

Yours A I R

*To Emily Ritchie*

The End House  
*September 27th [1894]*

To my joy I have just packed Maria<sup>2</sup> into an envelope, and registered her off to Mr F Macmillan I feel as if she were as glad to be rid of me poking and prying, as I am to be rid of her. It has been a real window opening in some ways, chiefly Irish ways

<sup>1</sup> *Books and Papers of Russell Sturgis* by his son Julian Sturgis

<sup>2</sup> Introductions to certain novels of Miss Edgeworth

Lord Knutsford told me he knew Miss Edgeworth very well, and she said she couldn't bear "*Patronage*," but that "*The Absentee*" represented her herself "Look for me in '*The Absentee*,'" she said He said she was very French and sprightly.

You two dear travelling ladies, are you basking and floating and piroetting in blue and lilac? We actually have a fine day again which we are all enjoying Lady Castletown has taken me a turn in Paradise with her two white horses

*To Emily Ritchie*

Eastbourne  
[November 1894]

This is such a four-post-bedstead of a place, sleepy invalids, nonagenarians and schools, bath-chairs and young ladies' schools alternately. My parasol blew away yesterday, as I was reading the account of the Czar's death<sup>1</sup>—poor, poor Czar—and the young ladies' schools and bath-chairs pursued it down the Esplanade—it was a public benefit.

Richmond brought down that maddening book the *Lys Rouge* which contains such clever things and such revolting things. He also brought some more of St. Amand, and we are deep in the Duchesse de Berri's adventures Joan of Arc was nothing to her. I have bought *Marie Amélie* cheap at Mudie's, which is great fun, but makes one hate Louis Philippe. I am no longer an Orleaniste.

I'm going out in my bath-chair, and for the first time don't feel like the bolster at starting, so that I hope the turn has come<sup>2</sup>

We went to the Huxleys', but it kept me awake all night. He looks very charming and unchanged, with the six portraits of his daughters hanging round. Mrs Huxley was ill He has built his house, and

<sup>1</sup> Czar Alexander III died on November the 1st.

<sup>2</sup> To Lady Bell she wrote, "Eastbourne wound me up, and coming home has set me ticking again"

does a great deal of gardening, and says he never expected to recover as he has done. Farewell, dearest, and I long to hear about the cottage

*To her Husband*

Brighton  
[August 1895]

. This is the most *piping* day of all the days we have had I am just back from my lunch at Mr. Willet's He showed me the most exquisite little prayer-book to-day, every page illuminated Louis XVI gave it to the Abbe Edgeworth on the scaffold, and when the Abbe died in America, all the jewels on the sides were torn off, to pay for his funeral

The Pooleys thoroughly enjoyed coming Hester and I took them to the station after dinner and drove back Brighton might have been Grenada or Bagdad or anything romantic you please, thousands of people, of electric lights, and Zephyrs and shimmers Brighton becomes beautiful after sunset All day long it burns and blazes, but it has answered my purpose very well and you certainly get enough seaside for a year in a fortnight here.

I hope Lucy Broadwood sang every one of your favourite songs All the lodgings were on music yesterday—a regular Saturnalia

I have been spending the morning with Tisey,<sup>1</sup> and reading some very interesting letters, Shelley's and others, to her father Shelley is just starting for a sail and raving about Spezzia and the friends who have lately joined them. His wife wants to go away, he says, and doesn't like the place It gives one an odd turn to see it all in black and white, and then they all want to borrow money of Horace Smith

<sup>1</sup> Eliza Horace Smith. She could remember Keats and Shelley. Her father, Horace Smith, told her to look at a gentleman "in ambrosial dark," sitting beneath a wide-spreading ilex tree "Do you see that man? that is a poet," he said It was Keats, who had come from Hampstead to Fulham for the day

*To Mrs. G. F. Watts*The Erd House  
Oct 7th [1895]

Why have I never been to see you? I wonder if you have seen my buncle of wishes walking in again and again! I go to that station, I do something I have on my mind, my head begins to ache, I come home again or I go to Leslie, or I meet somebody, or am not sure that you are in town I can't describe all the things which happen, but the best corsolation I have is that whether one walks in or not, one goes on existing in one's secret self alongside with certain people who are always kind and unchanged when one thinks of them.

I also live every day with my two pictures, with that head of my sister which is my treasure, and the picture you gave me of the not ungrateful person who wishes she came to see you, and who sends you both her love \*

I was so glad to hear yesterday from a neighbour that Signor was going to paint Mrs Josephine Butler, for hers is certainly a very noble Leonardo sort of head, and what a picture Signor will make of her!

Richmond is at the Priory with the Curzons I had a very great wish to go, and wondered what pictures of Signor's I should find there, but as usual I had a headache and couldn't start We are going to Dresden on Thursday for a month I am very busy packing away and tearing up old scraps

*To Emily Ritchie*Berlin  
[1895]

... What a contrast is this grim spot to smiling Dresden—it is like a shabby Paris, and is my idea of Chicago, but what delicious contents! We did so enjoy the beautiful opera last night, white, gold and electric, crammed with officers and Berlin, and the

beautiful music, gold and electric too Yes, that is what it is—not daylight Cecil Spring Rice came with us We are going to see pictures with him, so I will write no more now.

All Richmond said was not one word too much I came home from the Picture gallery, happy and grateful, and set off again about tea time, for the rehearsal at the Hoch-Schule, which was a thing to make one happier all one's life Joachim's kindness and his benevolent rule, the young musicians struggling with their new-fledged wings to fly, and the beautiful music and the completeness of it all were impressive

A little American girl, straight, light, sixteen, stepped up and played first fiddle to the whole orchestra You never heard anything so lovely—full sweet tones, suavity and spirit All the orchestra clapped when it was over, and Jo turned round benevolent, clapping, delighted He came down to say goodbye, and to send many warmest messages to you, and all England, he said, "You cannot stay for the concert?" but we had to go back, and pack and dine at seven.

We go tomorrow to Magdeburgh and take our tickets from there to the Hague

*To Mary Millars*

The End House  
[1895]

Give my best love to your dear father and tell him how glad I am I was born into the same age as he was I have been making immense hankering friends with enchanting people at Dresden, Holbein and Lippo Lippi specially, and others too, and 300 years hence, people will come and long to have known him

Meanwhile, as I am in his golden age, I should like to see him sometimes Could you ever spare time to come all this way and lunch? You can't

think how fresh and nice it is, the children whirl round and round on bicycles and I look out of window at the Jesuits next door and listen to the thrushes.

*To Hallam Lord Tennyson*

The End House  
Wimbledon  
December 11th [1895]

I have just been tearing up some papers, and among them is a note I wrote down one day after a walk with your father. The first part of the note I used for my little article, the second will possibly interest you, and I daresay you may have heard him speak of it

Your father began by saying that, as he walked thro' Eaton Square at night with Carlyle in the moonlight, Carlyle looked up at the houses round about, and said, "Acrid putrescence." Then the note goes on to say that your father was stopping at a coffee-house in London, and Carlyle came to smoke a pipe with him of an evening, and Mr FitzGerald was there. They had some talk about the immortality of the soul, upon which Carlyle began to say, "Eh! old Jewish rags! ye must clear your mind of all that. Why should we expect a hereafter? Your traveller comes to an Inn and he takes his bed, it's only for one night, and another takes it after him."

To which Alfred answered, "Your traveller comes to his Inn and lies down in his bed almost with the certainty that he will go on his journey rejoicing next morning," to which Carlyle only replied with a grunt, and presently went away

And then Mr. FitzGerald who was a man of great humour, said "You had him there" "Which proves," said your father, "how dangerous an 'lecture' is"

I like the little scrap so much I can't help ending it off with my love.

*To her Son*40, Park Lane, W  
[1895]

God bless and keep you and all of us, and make us love each other and other people, too. I always feel as if everybody had to make some *good* in the world, and to give out love and help to make other people's lives more easy

I feel very much made good and easy at this moment, the Smiths<sup>1</sup> are so kind Henry James, Mr. Guthrie, Mr Gibbs, all dined last night and asked after you, so did Mary Millais, and they were all very nice and there was a most delicious and shiny sort of dinner Mr Thompson has given me a picture of Mrs Hemans I think I must write an article about her

*To Mary Millais*The End House  
[1896]

I send you this little egotistical note to *Punch* it is almost the only tidy one, but I will copy out some more for your dear father How I hope he has had a more easy time and that he slept last night He seems to me like his own knight<sup>2</sup> crossing the ford in the sunset, and helping others to value the light in the sky overhead I always loved that picture beyond most of his beautiful noble pictures.

I am so touched that your father should have thought of me—I do better than admire his genius I *love* my old friend, and you his daughter

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The following recollections of Sir John Millais were written by my mother for his biography. Mr. Millais kindly allows me to reprint them here

"Soon after your parents' marriage, my father

<sup>1</sup> The Murray Smiths, with whom my mother was staying

<sup>2</sup> Sir Isumbras crossing the Ferry Sir John Millais died Aug 13, 1896

took us one day to see them. I do not remember being shown any pictures on this occasion, but there is one I can still see. Your mother was recovering from some illness, and she was extended straight in some beautiful flowing dress upon a sofa, with her head resting upon a round gilt leather cushion, which made a 'background of pale gold' to her face

"I remember once taking a picture to your father that an importunate friend was most anxious he should see

"*You* know better than to bring me such a thing as that!" said he, 'Take it away' And to this day I blush when I recall that work of art. Simplicity and the directness of his blame took away the sting of it; for it is not so much criticism that people resent generally as the spirit of censure in which it is given.

"Almost the last time I ever went to see him in his studio, that beautiful picture of 'The Old Garden' stood upon the easel I said how beautiful I thought it.

"Do you like it?" he answered rather sadly, 'I can tell you that a bit of my life has gone into that picture'

"I once saw an artist at work in a little wood near Knole on a certain day in July, when we all started on a happy expedition Mrs Millais invited me to join Her sister was there, and the Trollopes, and Mr. Charles Clifford We had found sunshine everywhere, and a drag at Sevenoaks, and as we walked through the woods, we came upon this painter at work under the trees. Our host stopped for a moment. 'Why,' said he to the painter, 'you have not got your lights right. Look, *this* is what you want' And he took the brush out of the painter's hand, and made a line or two on the picture, and then nodded to him and walked away.

"Mr Trollope laughed, and said, 'The man looks bewildered, he ought to know it is Millais,' and he ran back and told him. Then some one else laughed, and said, 'He ought to know it is Trollope.' So a second message was conveyed to the unfortunate painter, and greatly amused we all walked on through the woods to where the carriage was waiting<sup>1</sup>

"The last time I sat by your father at dinner, was at the house of my husband's sister, Mrs Freshfield. It was a very great pleasure to find Sir John there, and still more to find that my place was to be by his at dinner. After a long talk on books and pictures, he told me a ghost story, which, as he assured me it was true, I venture to repeat here.

"It was of an old manor house in the north, standing in an old Scotch garden. A London lawyer, who liked to go to Scotland, happened to see it one day as he was driving across the moor, and he expressed a wish to the friend with whom he was staying, for some such retreat to come to with his wife. She was out of health, and he wanted to get her away from London, and he added it was just what they would both like, only that he feared he would never be able to afford it, and he named the sum he could give. The friend answered that he might get such a house well within the price he named, this one was going to be put up for auction, but there was some ghost story about it, and no one up there would bid.

"Then the lawyer went back to town, but shortly afterwards he received a telegram from his friend in Scotland telling him that the house had been put up for auction, and finding it was going far below its value, he had secured it on the lawyer's behalf.

"The lawyer's wife was no less delighted than her

<sup>1</sup> My mother does not reveal that it was she herself who conveyed the second message—and that another member of the party then ran back, saying "Now he must be told that that was Miss Thackeray."

husband to hear of this purchase. She had been for some years past suffering from strange hysterical attacks, and was longing for change

"Her attacks came on in her sleep, and she would wake utterly exhausted. She always had one dream of an old house that she never remembered to have seen when she was awake. She used to find herself hurrying up and down the corridors, and along the paths and terraces of the old-fashioned garden. The place was all perfectly familiar to her, and she knew every yew hedge, and turn of the paths. She could not stop herself though she would be sinking with an exhaustion which unnerved her for hours after she awoke.

"When the autumn came, the family set off for the North. As they drove up the avenue leading to the house, the lawyer noticed that his wife was looking very strangely, but he put it down to fatigue. When he rang the bell the door was opened by the house-keeper, to whom he introduced himself, and said a friendly word or two of greeting, and almost immediately he began to ask her whether anything more had been heard of the ghost—whether it had appeared lately.

"'What sort of a ghost is it?' said he.

"The housekeeper did not answer, but stood quite still, looking hard at her new mistress

"'No one can answer that question better than the lady here,' she said at last, slowly.

"As for the poor lady, she gave a sort of cry, for as she came into the hall she saw the house which she had always dreamt of—and where she herself had been seen again and again. The end of the story, I believe, was that the lady got quite well in the fine Scotch air and quite gave up dreams and astral bodies."

*To Emily Ritchie*Brighton  
[1896]

Observe a new pen—calm and no blots! It produces a limited state of mind, and is I think exactly what I want. I filled my fountain pen at 5 a.m. and went back to sleep feeling that life was easier all round, and that stylographers pervade the universe.

Our Brighton has been a triumph rather than a success. I don't think in all my life I ever saw anything more lovely and vast than yesterday morning. Proud, capering, beautiful waves dashing against the beach, a divine light in the horizon, and exquisite lights on shore and on the clouds overhead, and all the tribes, Christians and Jews alike, dancing before the Ark.

We wound up the day by a delightful play. Thrilling—Mr and Mrs Kendal—revenge—banter—gambling—white parasols

. . . I have been doing some work, and I will take it to the post and drop this scrabble along with it. How are you? Is it finer? I do hope and trust it is. Here it really hardly matters as the sea is always dry, or perhaps I should say wet. Brighton is to me the most blessed spot.

*To Emily Ritchie*Brighton  
[1896].

I am now going back to Quills! One's self vibrates through a quill pen far more easily than through iron and wood, do try.

The sun is shining and everything looks very balmy. The thousands of excursionists look like nothing but barrelfuls of shrimps. I hate being of so little consequence as I feel when I see the crowds,

but again I comfort myself by thinking that every atom is eternally divisible

This afternoon I was told Sir Henry Cunningham was at the door, but couldn't leave a card because his coat was *buttoned!* I went out much surprised and found Herbert Spencer as rosy as ever "Goodbye" he said immediately, "goodbye Don't stop out, goodbye," and off he went

*To her Son*

The End House  
[1896]

Last night we all walked out on to the Common and heard the nightingale sing to the moon, then we sat on the loggia and wished you were there too.

Today Hester and I went to London to three dressmakers, and to see poor Dutton in his hospital I can't think why people are thought frivolous for going to dressmakers, it is most serious and exhausting I think, and yet one must have clothes and the tidier the better It is much more trouble to look tidy when one is old, I find, than when one is young

*To her Husband*

Hotel St Romain  
Paris  
March 20th [1897]

. I have two most delightful things to tell you about, *Don Giovanni*, the most merry, romantic performance Nobody except Zerlina, had any voice to speak of, but they did it so gaily and conscientiously, and as for the *Commendatore*' his notes boomed out of his white boots The theatre baking hot and we galloped home after the performance in two little carriages.

If only Nelson's statue and the Duke of York would sing to you like that, as you come and go to the India Office, what a good time you would have!

The Duke of York might produce a splendid note up the column

Then this afternoon I have been to George Duckworth's box at the *Français*, to see *The Cid* I couldn't have believed it possible, the whole *Français* crammed, all the schools, all the Lycees, all the head masters, and I and the two girls, and the 3,000 people, simply vibrating with excitement as to whether Miss Adeline Dudlay was going to get over the blood of her father and marry the noble young warrior, the court and the King and all the attendant knights were absorbed too in the love affair And oh! dear me, how well they acted and how they spoke it I didn't stop for *Les Plaideurs*, for I find it pays so much better to do less But it is certainly a treat to hear such lovely French rolled out

We mean to travel all day Sunday and to get to Cannes on Monday afternoon But I think the coming back to see you will be nicer than all the going abroad

*To Mrs. Warre-Cornish*

Bordighera  
March [1897]

We all three took a real walk yesterday, we wandered through the old town and saw a peasant woman and told her we were tired and wanted to rest in a garden, she flung open the first gate crying, "Entrace, entrace," so I said, "Is it allowed?" And she answered, "Per Bacco! yes"

Wasn't it delightful to hear the Gods called upon in this Christian spirit? Bacchus took us into a divine arbour, flowers starting, butterflies flitting Oh blessed Bacchus!

*To her Son*

Bordighera  
March [1897]

Hester brought home crimson and white anemones from an olive wood I can't think how the flowers

grow as they do, for everything is so dusty and dried up, but the flowers blaze away quite contentedly. We had a great storm of wind yesterday, and the palm trees were bowing and bobbing. There never was anything less suitable to a high wind than a palm tree.

Yesterday we lunched in a green field with violets and anemones, a ravine, an old castle in the distance, and having lunched we went on to the castle and the fortified village. My gracious, it was like Dante and Browning and all the Cossas and Van Eyks boiled down, the winding black zig-zag steps, the arches, the long passages. Then little holy families having meals beyond the shadows in lighted-up inner rooms, and girls feeding goats, and old crones spinning, it seemed as if all the fairy tales had become alive.

There was a ruined palace of the Dorias at the top of the rock, and miles of subterranean passages down below and the people looked at us, and never moved a muscle, as if they were ghosts. All their windows gave into these black, narrow defiles on arches. Two nice little ragazzi showed us the way with their arms round one another's necks.

. . . My favourite person here is a baby called Walther von Winter, a German baby, who generally posts my letters for me and who stuffed your last card into the box. I hear Walther von



Winter roaring He is very particular as to which hat he wears His nurse wears bare arms and a sort of cap with long ribbons , she is a German, not an Italian

I don't know where the Italians are Mrs Fanshawe's villa is more Italian than anything else. The two nuns who look after her hospital are Italian, and the gardener and the footman The dogs are Danes, Danish boar hounds, but they understand Italian, and jump upon you in any language They are most alarmingly affectionate, and peculiarly horrible—but Rosa adores them

*To her Husband*

Villa Guicciardini

Florence

April [1897]

Abbiamo arrivato—Imagine—no you can't imagine!



We find ourselves in a palazzo 500 years old<sup>1</sup> Hester and I in bedrooms with painted ceilings and a private sitting-room, a mixture of (I should imagine) the Palace of Delhi and Henbury, with green still gardens and birds out of windows, and Sir John coughing in the distance

We had a wonderful journey here, first in and out of tunnels, divine seas and sights for an instant, then more tunnels Hester must tell you about Bulbo and his carpet-bag. Then he slumbered beside his umbrella, the carpet-bag was in worsted work and the

<sup>1</sup> We were on a visit to Sir John Edgar.

jewels embroidered alternate rubies and emeralds  
He wished the windows to be shut The American  
lady said we should faint He said, "There are  
eighty-four tunnels between this and Pisa" I said,  
"Then you shall pull up the window forty times and  
I will pull it down the other forty' He gave me a  
look of fury The American lady went off laughing.  
"It's no use trying jokes with such people as that,"  
she said. Bulbo merely slept on scornfully

I don't know where to begin or to end or  
how to go on, everything is so interesting Sir John  
has been taking us round the garden and showing us  
his sacred shrine lined with books, with a back door  
by which he escapes from bores

I paid him a solemn little visit in his study last  
night We invented a book *The Seven Champions  
of the Victorian Age* It would be a fine subject,  
wouldn't it? Nicholson, Gordon, Lawrence, Outram,  
John Bright, Newman (this is Sir John's hero, also  
Parnell) People who didn't care about getting on  
for themselves.

*To her Son*

Florence  
[1897]

To tell the truth these little horrors of Florentine  
tea parties seem a desecration on the lilac hills. I  
shall write a story about it some day. Friendly  
converse, remembrance and humanity are as lovely  
as the lilac hills, but why do they always seem to  
have to be mixed up with stuffy tea and bread and  
butter?

Hester is steadily mending and the rest of us are  
gradually recovering from our influenza. She is  
going to have some farce cooked by the chef who  
drives up in a donkey carriage every day to cook the  
meals The dinner gets more and more invalidish  
as they all get more and more ill, entrees of gruel, of

beef-tea, of fried pills The man-servant, Eusebio, pours out different mixtures and we all go to bed at nine o'clock! Viva la bella Italia! its very nice notwithstanding, not so very unlike Sedbergh

Sir John has been too *enchanting*. He would be delightful in a cockle-shell. He tells stories of India like Kipling, only better. He is very unwell, and just as delightful as if he were well. He seems to me more like a generation of Englishmen than one man. Vivid, wise, delightful company he most certainly is.

*To her Son*

The End House  
Pre-Jubilee Sunday [1897]

I am out of spirits and very sad, for my dear Mrs Oliphant is too ill ever to get well again. She sent for me and kissed me and sent you and Hester her love. I think she is longing to go. They sent to borrow Alfred Tennyson's poems last night. There was one that she wanted. In it he says Death should have another name and that is "Onward"<sup>1</sup>.

. . . It was Mrs. Oliphant who bestowed on me my first review when I was twenty-three. It was summer time and I opened *Blackwood*, and my father beamed with satisfaction.

It is so curious how all one's life remains—things don't go, we fade not they. It is all there.

*To Rhoda Broughton*

The End House  
June 29 [1897]

I took your note to Denny Oliphant and her sister, it said so truly what all our hearts are feeling.

I am going to get ready now to go to the funeral.

<sup>1</sup> . . . Death's truer name  
Is "Onward," no discordance in the roll  
And march of that Eternal Harmony  
Whereto the worlds beat time

*Ode to the Duke of Clarence*

I have lost a life-long friend,<sup>1</sup> and the world too in that wise, tender and humourous woman whom all delighted to love and appreciate. She was to me one of those people who *make* life—so many un-make it. As I think of those who *make* life for us, I think of those I love, and may I think of your sister at this moment? who used to remind me of my own, in her understanding and sincerity and the sweet reserve of her nature.

Mrs Oliphant said to her girls, "Make things look comfortable after I am gone"

*To Denny Oliphant*

[1897]

. I, who am near the end, can only tell you who have a busy life of work and love and solicitude before you, that death is *no* parting, and God's will is that we should be faithful and love, and yet love again and again, and I think the meaning is that He is in all true feeling, and that our dead love is not gone but lives again in the present

I can't explain, even to myself, how it is that I hardly ever hug my children without a thought of my sister.

*To her Son*

The End House  
October 2 [1897]

This morning the first proof of my Edition<sup>2</sup> has arrived. I haven't read it yet. I was shy—can you understand that odd sort of hold-off feeling, which seizes one about the things one most cares about?

<sup>1</sup> Mrs Oliphant died June the 25th.

<sup>2</sup> A new edition of the works of Thackeray with biographical prefaces by my mother. Of these Introductions Swinburne wrote—"To the exquisite genius, the tender devotion, the fine taste and the unfailing tact of his daughter, we owe the most perfect memorial ever raised to the fame and to the character of an author, record by any editor or commentator or writer of prefaces or articles to his work."

I can't tell you how I do feel more and more what a courageous tender-hearted father I had, and how proud I am of him

When I have done six more introductions I shall go to Brighton and bask for a week, and when you first come back I mean to do no work at all until the end of January I love doing it and it makes me very happy, but it certainly disagrees with your excitable Mama

*To A. C. Swinburne*<sup>1</sup>

[1902]

DEAR OLD FRIEND,—I have just seen your kind words, which made me very happy and grateful to you My daughter found the *Quarterly* and came and read it to me!

As Tennyson once wrote to my father, "It is because you are the old friend that you are, and also because you are the great man that you are, that I feel all the fullness of your praise"

These were not quite the words, but it was the sense, and I who am grateful to think that I am the daughter of a great man and the friend of great men, send you my love and my thanks for this bit of new life and pride and happiness for mine and me, and I am yours—decorated by you—

Affectionately, ANNE RITCHIE.

*To Mrs. Gerald Ritchie*

Brighton, December [1897]

The last of the MS is despatched and the notes go off to-day, and this great and, to me, very real event is a cause of most genuine thankfulness and gratitude. I love to think of my father's unconscious protest

<sup>1</sup> This letter is inserted here in order to complete the series of letters about the Biographical Edition Swinburne's article on Dickens, in which he mentions that Edition appeared in July 1902, and was the first signed article published in the *Quarterly*

against the coldness and flippancy and silliness of the present fashion, and I think it may add something good and simple, as he was himself, to the thoughts of those who are yet to read and to love him. It is a finer standard than this hateful low standard of today.

*To Reginald J. Smith*

The End House  
April [1898]

. Hester, recovered—removed and thought un-infectious, is allowed to hold the *Vanity Fair* in her own hands, and her exclamation of pleasure and delighted approbation is so cheering that I long to carry it on to you

I had a charming letter from George Russell, and Richmond sent me the best compliment of all. He says Lord George Hamilton was very much interested *indeed*, and said he could remember Dizzy saying to him that he couldn't understand Dickens, but that my father's style was so magnificent that he would never cease to be read and to be admired.

I am longing to know how the Edition is selling

*To Bernard Holland*

12, Kensington Court Gardens  
April 9 [1898]

I have just had a line from Gussie to whom I sent your beautiful book<sup>1</sup>. I then saw Pinkie looking with such longing eyes that I could not resist giving her another copy, and I sent your letter with a third to India. I do not generally treat my sisters-in-law so liberally, but somehow I feel as if this dear message of your mother's ought to be given—not bought by each. I am sure the book will live on—don't mind what anybody says to you. It is a gift for those who have hearts to feel with. Richmond told me the *Times* was

<sup>1</sup> *The Letters of Mary Sibylla Holland* first published in 1898.

churlish, but what would you expect of a hurried review? It is little by little that her noble influence will spread. How far it has reached already I think your introduction is such a true picture

Do you know that you never came to dinner on Monday, Mr Lushington, Edith Sichel, and your empty place?

*To her Son*

The End House  
July 31 [1898]

In the garden—by the fig tree

The most heavenly sunshine and pretty shadows  
There the shadow of a bird flew by, now I hear your  
father's steps, now he wheels by his bicycle. There  
are flies buzzing and a persistent French horn which  
has been going on and on ever since I came out

I have been reading Renan, who says how can  
people dwell as they do on their own small troubles,  
when there are such astounding things to interest  
them everywhere—suns—moons—colours—velocities  
—calculations—discoveries—and it is really a very  
sensible suggestion I had a bad day yesterday and  
couldn't appreciate suggestions, but to-day is delicious,  
and I'm enjoying every minute (jackdaw chatters over  
the Jesuits' wall).

I came back, as Hester will have told you, and I  
am to go thro' this new treatment, which it is much  
better to face than to go on waiting and waiting and  
not getting any better but rather the contrary<sup>1</sup>

We laughed out loud over your pictures, and the  
“Pardons” and “ces bons Bretons” and “ces horribles  
English,” and I was much impressed by the Kissells’  
brilliant tour-de-force getting you up at 4.30! Tell  
Mr Kissell I am waiting to be better to write to him,

<sup>1</sup> My mother's letters give no impression of the constant ill health from which she suffered, she never dwelt upon this, nor did she allow it to interfere with the ordinary course of her life

and give my kind compliments to Mrs Kissell, and tell her how glad I am you are staying with them<sup>1</sup>

*To her Son*

*August 18 [1898]*

Mrs Ritchie presents her compliments to Monsieur Denis. She also hugs him and gives him a kiss

His father has piles of maps of Normandy and Brittany and is making out the very most delightfulest tour

All the Madame de Sevigné country I do envy you. Would that I were Madame Kissell to mount a bicyclette and fly after you—Les Rochers where she lived—the avenues she planted—Rennes where she used to visit in her big coach I can't help posting my book of Madame de Sevigné for you to read I'm sure you will like the place all the better if you have read about her I wrote it when you were a baby and proudly dedicated it to my Chevalier Stupid Madame de Sevigné only cared for her daughter who was odious Madame de Grignan was just like her name Madame de Grognon, Madame de Grignotant (There is some word for stinting, something like Grignan but I can't quite remember it) but dear jolly generous loving Madame de Sevigne, I love her, and I always imagine her something like Mrs Freeman

Our dinner was a very great success, and Henry James not only ornamental but useful and really and truly kind. Arthur and Adeline enjoyed themselves extremely and appreciated his stories and descriptions He is going to take us to see a cinematograph at the Palace—a flying train—and you see the country spinning before you, and then you plunge into tunnels and come out again to more scenery

I asked him if he had read Sarah Grand's books, he said, "It may be Pride, it may be Prejudice, but I have

<sup>1</sup> Her son was learning French with a French family in Brittany.

*not*," so I said, "Perhaps it may be Sense or Sensibility," and Henry burst out laughing and said ".I only need Persuasion!"

We have had some delightful days in the garden, and now I am thankful to say I am going to have my final doctoring done, and I hope you will find a nice new Mama on your return

The English moon has been most glorious, quite as lovely as your French moon, and The End House has been flooded with silver I shall certainly be very glad to see The End House again by moonlight, or sunlight or even paraffin! God bless you my darling beloved boy, and "He will!" as the old apple-woman used to say to my father

*To her Husband*

Brighton  
10 January [1899]

You will be glad to hear that Brighton is a most agreeable place and that we are enjoying it

Two rather amusing things happened One was I took Pinkie to call on Herbert Spencer. He was much pleased that she should play to him, but said the worst of Beethoven was he never knew when to leave off. The second movement of the Sonata he stopped "Thank you, I'm getting flushed, that will be quite enough. Thank you" He was rather nice, very absurd, and very discursive The poor remaining companion nearly wept on the stairs as she let us out. "Now happy Agnes Shinner is departed, life is scarcely bearable," she says I have invited her to lunch on Tuesday by way of making life worth having.

The second, that I went to see Tisey Smith who sang to me She says there are four notes, head notes, throat notes, chest and stomach notes, and Charles Kean who taught Charles Kean Junior to act shouted at him because his "O" in Romeo was so

dull. So young Charles Kean said, "Why it's from my stomach," and his father roared, "It should come from your bowels, Sir."

The sky was like a divine parrot's breast just now with a deep deep flapping sort of sea Herbert Fisher strolled by looking like a philosopher

O how nice it is to be going to do just as I like all this evening !

They have asked me to join the "William Black Memorial Fund," and I was very glad to do it for I love some of his books

Rudyard Kipling told us when he was in America he went salmon fishing, and in the middle of a vast stream a man in rags arose upon a great rock, also with a fishing rod, and the man said, "Are you an Englishman? I have been to England and stayed there, and there is only one man in England who can write a book and his name is—" Mr Kipling said he began to wonder what was coming, "*Black*," says the man

*To Reginald F. Smith*

116, Marine Parade  
Brighton  
21 February [1899]

It was kind of you to send me the Browning Letters, how glad I am to have them I feel as if I ought also to have a little casket to keep them in, with their warm record of great love and true hearts It is not so much or not *only* because Mr. and Mrs Browning were poets and world-known, as because they were beloved friends that I prize it all I am trying as I write to remember a line by Mrs Browning, "Euripides the human" was it not ?

The Brownings are like noble simple people of the past whose life was in their genius, & their genius was to love too, I scratch this out for it is too like a phrase Sometimes I rather long to lock

the casket up, but life *is* so difficult, and a great feeling like this one is such gain and happiness and interest, that I am glad indeed to be one of those to hold the key to it I am sure that Miss Browning will feel exactly as I do, and I can so well realise Pen's loving pride in his parents' history—never was there such a story, except my dear Tennysons indeed, and she too was a poet in her life and fervent feeling, though she did not write it down Again thank you—I needn't say that I have hardly read more than the beginning

How delightfully the very *first* letter leads it all off

*To her Husband*

Brighton  
[1899]

. . . The day began with cats and dogs and howling wind and snarling seas Then in the late afternoon the storm subsided, and great mountains floated about in the sky, and balmy winds blew gently, and Dorothy and I took a long walk all the way from Sussex Square back home. We were carried along by wild excitement. Herbert Spencer has invited Dorothy to succeed Miss Shinner as his companion, and to my amazement and pleasure Dorothy accepts She is delighted She is going up to play to him tomorrow, and to see if it is possible Even if it lasts three weeks or three months, it is something to be companion to Herbert Spencer All your mornings to yourself, and to play the piano to him of an afternoon, never longer than ten minutes, when he feels his pulse and desires you to leave off He is extremely cross, but also extremely kind It is certainly very amusing and unexpected

Yesterday we drove to Lady Burne-Jones Her house is all done by Willy Benson, with one or two beautiful frescoes on the nursery wall by E B J His studio is a lovely broadside of a window with a deep

sill, and just outside the old church and the Kipling's ivy manor house. It is a very delicious home indeed

Lady Burne-Jones is most touching, tender, and courageous. She says all her life she has made the greatest mistake of being too reserved. She said George Eliot once said to her, "Ah! say I love you, to those you love. The eternal silence is long enough to be silent in, and that awaits us all."

I have hardly recovered from my tea at the K——'s, a cup of friendly sand in the desert of the Sahara, or a conversation at the North Pole. They have, however, lent me an enchanting book, for which I bless them, *My Official Wife*, do get it

*To Mrs Henry Hart*

Holmrook  
Tunbridge Wells  
*March 17th [1899]*

Your dear kind letter shall go to Billy who will be back next Tuesday, I hope. We don't get home till just after Easter. It is so delightful for the children to have your never failing kindness and welcome to look to and your invitation seems almost a part of the feeling of holiday and coming home.

The spring here is most wonderfully irresistible. A sort of down-pour of buds, and then birds flapping and singing, and sweet copses flowering all round about in the country.

As for this ridiculous little toy-town, it makes one feel like a lady in an automatic machine winding up the narrow path and coming round the artificial rocks and putting up a parasol with a click. And now Farewell, with another Thank you

*To her Husband*

Holmrook  
*March [1899].*

Home-cook would be a better name for this lodging! I have begged the land-lady not to send us up such

delicious meals in future. Howdoyoudo this morning? Did you have a less foggy fussicating day yesterday? We had the very most lovely drive imaginable thro' Eridge Woods, with all the beautiful mist of little buds everywhere, instead of the ugly east-wind mist which has been spoiling everything We had a little carriage and a plucky hump-back boy to drive us, and a frisky pony who made nothing of the hills and took us into Arcady

To-day we had an expedition to Southborough, the old Inn<sup>1</sup> has been pulled down, but the delicious spring has not been pulled down, the millions of buds, the floods of light and the birds and the songs.

The sun was setting, and every tree and branch seemed whistling up In the middle of it all, coming out of a little coppice, we met two smut black chimney sweeps I believe they were probably gods in disguise I'm sure we were for five minutes

*To Mrs Gerald Ritchie (in India)*

36, Grosvenor Road

[November 1899]

. . . I awoke before six in the dark yesterday and I thought I was dreaming still, I heard cheers and cheers and music and more cheers It was the regiments going off to the war,<sup>2</sup> and I suppose they were crossing Vauxhall Bridge It was all so sleepy and so dark and so puzzling, that it was not till I read the evening paper that I realized what had happened. The crowds were up at five o'clock to see them off It all seemed like something one had read of, rather than a real, true actual thing

*To Emily Ritchie*

36, Grosvenor Road

[Dec 1899]

What a glorious burst of sunshine this is, and I'm sure it is wanted. I never saw a more impressive

<sup>1</sup> Where Thackeray stayed and wrote part of *Esmond*

<sup>2</sup> South Africa

heart-aching sight than all the people's faces yesterday, hundreds and hundreds of people with their newspapers Hester dragged me off, saying, "Don't read!" But after I had left her, a little newspaper boy jumped into the omnibus I said to the man next me, "There's nothing here," and he with a grubby finger, without a word, pointed to the fatal added paragraph at the end<sup>1</sup> As I write, I look up and see the people still passing, reading newspapers The only consolation to me is that it is not England crushing poor innocent farmers, but fighting a great and long planned revolt I hope the Boers will build a wall and keep their beastly gold mines and leave us at peace in our Cape

I have so often thought how thankful I was not to have been born in the time of Nelson and Wellington, and now I see England is full of heroes and wonders and splendour, and it has all caught one up, alas!

<sup>1</sup> English defeat at Colenso

## XII

1900—1912

*To Mrs. Gerald Ritchie (in India)*

Florence  
[1900]

We mean to stay another week in Florence, and then go back in *another* week, taking it easy by Milan and Lucerne. The birds are singing in the garden as I write, and Billy says the Oxford birds are all tuned up—do birds sing in India?

Yesterday we went to see Sir John Edgar and found him just as usual, groaning but looking younger, and the kind ladies, and the sunset in the sky, and lo! in walks a neighbour across the garden with the last evening news—another victory for Lord Roberts along the Modder, 3,000 offering to surrender. Can it be Joubert? It is all rather mysterious, but O what a blessing to see Peace coming over the mountains.

Can't you imagine yesterday? and the two old friends, Sir John and his neighbour, exchanging telegrams and beaming, and us ladies all twittering and beaming too?

It has been the most dramatic good news for me and Hester all the way along, the first we heard was on the steps of the Cathedral at Genoa, where the newsman was selling *Nazioni*, and we could hardly understand how good it all was, and what "Resa di Kronje" amounted to. My child, every word you say is what I feel about the war and about politics and about fighting. Last night I lay thinking about

our noble Dandies and "Cooks' sons," and of that wise old man Lord Roberts forgetting his own overwhelming grief, to plan victory and moderation and success for his country. And then I thought of overriding, conquering Kitchener working with him so loyally, and the people waiting so courageously and patiently, and Zebul coming at last. I do thank God that life is not only bad and hard, but strong and kind and enduring.

*To Rhoda Broughton*

36, Grosvenor Road  
[1900]

Half a loaf is better than no bread, and your kind letter extracts a penny roll from me. If each of your many admirers send a guinea, you will have more than enough.

We are all preparing to return home on Monday week and then I shall come soon. Hester and I got to Florence and got back again, with such a luggage of rivers, delicious hills and galleries and marble steps. How lovely things *are*, and curiously enough it seems to me that the five minutes of later life and the passing glances, are worth all the nice bountiful twelve hours at a time of one's youth.

I'm so glad I was such a young idiot, and left *something* for now—I brought back Leonardo da Vinci's "*Cena*" from Milan among other things, which I declare I never saw before, though I have *looked* at it at intervals all my life long.

Hester radiated, and I often thought of your sight of the Flower City, but we never got to the Certosa.

I am now preparing to go off to the Gosse-Crewe-Burghclere luncheon. I suppose a *Wetsuntide* is good for the country but as soon as the trees have drunk enough I do hope it will leave off raining.

*To Emily Ritchie*Brighton  
[June 1900]

This is Saturday Golden day, anything exquisite you can think of I imagine that this will arrive about the same time as my family, and how I wish I could also come in thro' the letter-box, and listen to the heavenly conversation of your good company<sup>1</sup>

I have been going to sleep over George Sand and trying to think of literature as music or rather to hear the music of literature I really and actually come upon bits of Beethoven in George Sand George Eliot is to me only Mendelssohn (*Romola* is Kalkbrenner's exercises) My father—yes and Dickens too—seem to me at times to belong to Mozart. My father, when he is moved, and Dickens when he is irresistible Micawber and the Kenwigs are Mozart, and that scene out of somewhere—*The Old Curiosity Shop*?—where Kit takes his Mother to the play When you write next tell me how it strikes you and how the musical party goes off

*To Mrs. Gerald Ritchie (in India).*The End House  
[August 1900]

Mrs Ritchie has come into the garden to cut a cabbage leaf, to make an apple pie, and to write to her Miggs She is extremely hot, but only hot. Yesterday was suffocating too, and if you touched anything it began to smoke!

Today is poor Richmond's Budget<sup>2</sup> and he won't be home till midnight Yesterday he was back at eight-thirty, we dined at nine and we sat comfortably cooling down in the garden till past eleven, with such stars—The Wain—and some other great shining wonders.

<sup>1</sup> A musical party<sup>2</sup> Indian Budget Debate in the House of Commons.

On Monday I am going for my expedition on Mrs. Watney's yacht, the *Palatine*. I have a new grey serge, and boots with gutta-percha soles by command! It is like a page out of Stevenson. At 7.25 on Monday, two sailors are to meet me with *Palatine* on their shirts and caps, by the steps leading to the pier and to convey me on board, whither oh whither? And if I don't write next Friday don't be surprised.

Richmond came back rather cheerful last night. He says the Budget was very interesting and I am waiting for the newspapers to know why. I hate to read the papers, it is like the Book of Revelation, seal after seal broken and misery and pestilence, but what courage and noble endurance! Now I will post this and return to Mrs Hemans, if I could but get her done before I go!

*To Mrs. Gerald Ritchie (in India)*

The End House

August 9th [1900]

This isn't in the least bit where I am! my present address (which mind you don't write to) is SS *Palatine*, Dartmouth, Devon—with the *Britannia* and all the three hundred little midshipmen at one side, and cliffs white gulls pouring rain at the other. I have come up to a dear little deck cabin, it is 10.30 on the 9th of August, and there is just time to catch the mail and answer your welcome letter.

My most adventurous adventure has ended in doing me more good than I can tell you. I feel a perfectly different person since I came, and except one day, we have really escaped the storm miraculously—the fearful storm—by being safe in port. The *Palatine* is 500 tons and very, very steady, and oh! so neat and clean, *Pinafore* is nothing to it. There are twenty-six crew and servants, four visitors and the Dr., and Mrs. Watney. The visitors are an authoress, an admiral, a schoolmaster and a Squire, my old

acquaintance, Mr Milnes-Gaskell This is really rather like him [A picture] His son took him to the stores and rigged him up with yellow india-rubber shoes This is the authoress, [a picture] also india-rubber shoes and a grey costume. They are all most extremely kind, and I shall stay on until the 14th, when I rejoin my deserted family I have been made very happy by the most delightful trinity of a letter from Richmond, Hester and Billy, all deeply sympathetic over the terrible storm But in Portland Harbour, with all the great ships coming in (twenty-five great line of battleships) and all the crowds of boats and launches, it was the most wonderful and amusing and elating sight, and I never realized what the Navy was before, except once with Billy at the moving pictures at the Polytechnic.

*To Emily Ritchie*

Mrs. Watney's Yacht  
August 9th [1900].

Since I wrote, we have been safely anchored and seeing the most beautiful sights in the world.

It was like Turner yesterday in the sunset, when one, two, three, six, eight great ships, came with state, sailing into the harbour Out of the mist, some sudden gleam lit up all the labyrinths of spars, and the sailors up aloft, and then it all became mist again, with huge forms still advancing. When it was dark, there were all the lights over everything

Our Admiral is a delightful companion and so is our Milnes-Gaskell, they started in a gig for the shore and a walk to Weymouth Mr Milnes-Gaskell talks always with racy fun and is an enchanting gossip The gig is going off, and I shall send this by the nice Matthew Mark Luke and John sailors, who put on their tarpaulins to row on shore The boat is here, a demain'

*To Mrs Gerald Ritchie (in India)*

[Jan 1901]

. We have been reading a page of history<sup>1</sup> I went to see Laura yesterday, and all the way from Victoria to St James' was lined with people waiting, the blinds in Buckingham Palace were down, as in every club and office All the people were in black, interested and gravely excited I said to the cabman, "What is it?" He said, "The King, ma'am, it's the King coming up."

When Richmond came home, he told us Lord George [Hamilton] went with the others to St. James' to swear allegiance. There were crowds of people there (Can you imagine Mr Lecky on one knee kissing the Royal hand?) The King was very outgoing, very much moved and overcome, and they all felt for him very sincerely

When I came back, the crowds were flowing out of St Paul's and waiting in front of the Bank and the Mansion House

*To Beatrix Paul*

[March 1901]

BELOVED GOD-DAUGHTER,—How I do like it!<sup>2</sup> Aunt A, Beatrice, Christening! Almond Birthday Cakes! Apple-tart, Barley-sugar, Cream ices!

It seems to me everything nice is expressed by A B C to say nothing of it's making my favourite places such as Aldeburgh, Brighton, Cromer, quite easy to reach. It is a delightful present, and I shall always be using it, all the more that Sir William Broadbent strongly recommends Brighton!. . I have been reading *Much Ado about Nothing*, and when I read to where Beatrice "like a lapwing runs," I sent you all my love, but I did not imagine you at work, but flying thro' a garden

Your loving

AUNT A.

<sup>1</sup> The death of Queen Victoria<sup>2</sup> An A B.C. sampler.

*To Emily Ritchie*

Brighton  
[September 1901]

As I drove home I met Herbert Spencer in his carriage with his two recalcitrant attendants I got out of mine to speak to him He looked about thirty-six, and is coming to call to-morrow

Then I went to Tisey<sup>1</sup> who will be ninety on the 15th. of November "The Fifth act, my dear," she says, "but not the last scene Oh' no"

She has lent me (with a good deal of reluctance) Ainger's *Life of Charles Lamb* She said to him, "I hope you had plenty of mint sauce with your Lamb"

She suggested an article for me to write, *Frederica Bremer* I think I shall go to Sweden and get it up some day, Bremer v Ibsen might be instructive

I am not enjoying myself as much as if you and Edith were here It is being like a newspaper with little paragraphs and then a good deal of nothing particular, but I am thankful to have come, and I feel already a great deal better.

*To Reginald J. Smith*

109, St George's Square  
25th July [1902]

What a Jack Thomas Carlyle was, with his attacks upon giants. Do you remember his calling my father a Cornish giant? as if it were a liberty of tall men to be taller than short men!

. At this moment I am furious with him, cross-grained, ungrateful, self-absorbed old nut-cracker He who could have such beautiful thoughts should have lamented not his fellow man but his own egotistical puerilities.

<sup>1</sup> Miss Horace-Smith

*To her Daughter*Sedbergh  
[1903]

The wind is up again to-day, but yesterday was a day of days, I basked, he golfed, they golfed.

I have invited Miss Dormer to dine and go with us to Donald Tovey's Concert. She plays delightfully, and is really a dear creature. I can't get over old Mrs Weisse's extraordinarily fine performance the day before yesterday. It was really very pathetic, the old musician pulling herself together and playing like a young disembodied spirit. She used to teach Mrs Sidgwick and Lady Blanche Balfour.

Mr Crawford has sent us two brace of grouse, and writes a long affectionate letter. Did I tell you I wrote an answer to him, and said at the end, "Grüssen," German for grouse?

Yesterday, when they were all out I arranged the tea, but I forgot to fill up the fire in the kitchen and it went out. Comes Smith with her head on one side "I think Mem, I can light a fire! I do believe that it is a thing I understand. I have brought up a chicken from the egg, fed it, looked after it, killed it, plucked it, trussed it and roasted it here on this very kitchen fire, and served it for a gentleman and lady in the dining-room before one o'clock all by meself! So I think ye can trust me to laight the fire for tea."

*To Edmund Gosse*

Feb 29th [1904]

Thank you for your kind letter and for your sympathy and warm expression of feeling for my dear brother<sup>1</sup>. For brother he has been for years and years of constant goodness and faithful affection. I, who am used to love people who *do* things, may be forgiven if I think even more of what they *were*, than of

<sup>1</sup> Leslie Stephen died February 22nd.

what they accomplished Only it is a sort of comfort to hear him praised, and all these truly appreciating words of friendship will make his children feel less parted from him. Again, thank you

*To Emily Ritchie*

[The New Forest]  
9th June [1905]

It should be ashamed of itself for pouring so, but we are getting acclimatized, and we are quite reckless as to fires

Yesterday we had an expedition in Thena Clough's victoria and spirited horse across the common, and all the way we were meeting carts, vans, barrows, coal-drays loaded with happy people on their way to Auberon Herbert's tea—"Oncommon good tea tu," said our coachman Anyone can go They were taking children and grandmothers and all going themselves, it really was great fun Then we passed a dream of an old house, Moyles Court, standing among great trees, with a low wall over which we could see the beauty of the ancient garden, then we reached Margie Poore's Vicarage, by a beautiful old church tower—the Vicarage modern, but in a *bower* of roses—I never saw anything like it, the paths pink with the fallen leaves and the fresh buds coming out thro' the rain She told me that Dame Alice Lisle, who had her head off at seventy-two for taking in two rebels who appealed to her, came from that exquisite old Manor we passed She went to sleep in Court, while Jeffries was condemning and rating her She is buried in the little churchyard with her daughter

As it is my birthday I am sending you a copy of Dr Johnson's prayer which I love, it is a prayer too old for you, but which speaks from that beloved man straight to one's heart, to mine most certainly.

"O Lord, my Maker and Protector, who hast

graciously sent me into this world to work out my salvation, enable me to drive from me all such unquiet and perplexing thoughts as may mislead or hinder me in the practise of those duties which Thou hast required . . . And while it shall please Thee to continue me in this world, where much is to be done, and little to be known, teach me, by Thy Holy Spirit, to withdraw my mind from unprofitable and dangerous inquiries from difficulties vainly curious, and doubts impossible to be solved Let me rejoice in the light which Thou hast imparted, let me serve Thee with active zeal and humble confidence, and wait with patient expectation for the time in which the soul which Thou receivest shall be satisfied with knowledge Amen ”

*Notes of Happy Things*<sup>1</sup>

How much I might have written of beautiful and happy things all this time—and vexing things too! only I intend to keep this book full of sunny cheerful happenings

Last night I had an odd dream that a message, some happy good message came to me, and I awoke with a sort of happy shock Amen,—my message is nearly over now, but I mean to enjoy old age as much as I can, and I do feel that the happiness of the old makes peace for others, and, as Huxley said to his wife, “It should be the cheerful acceptance of the inevitable”

I still love my own life and the lives of others very much indeed

Tea at Mary Cholmondeley's. She had asked us, and we went into a most intelligent, cool, handsome drawing-room, off the Kensington High Road, with

<sup>1</sup> The following extracts are taken from a little MS book of my Mother's named by her, *Notes of Happy Things*. These notes are undated they can, however, only refer to the years between 1902-1905

sofas and recesses and pictures, like a country room. Victoria Cholmondeley is a most charming, outgoing creature Diana poured out tea, Mary received the company Elegant ladies came floating in with feathers, hats and a pretty stateliness of manner There were plenty of flowers and a most delicious tea Mr Julian Corbett and I discussed the difficulty of disposing of tea-cups without a table

First lady, earnestly "Do come to tea with me one day"

Second lady, passionately "Yes, yes, I will indeed"

Pinkie and I departing, found a passing omnibus and whirled off to the Watts, where I had long tried to go

Holland House was over-flowing with people and flower-shows, streams of carriages were rolling by. Little Holland House was, as it always is, calm and delightful with pictures and flowers. Watts was in his studio among his beautiful dreams He looked more like Titian than ever He gets up at four every morning and starts work, and he paints all the noble fancies which come into his mind "Better to wear out than rust out," he said I told him how I admired his picture of Joachim, and he said · "I tried to put some music into it" Then he told me a story of a sort of poem he had suggested to Donald Tovey, who sat down and began to play the poem "That is Beethoven," said Donald, "but is it not exactly what you told me to play?"

The most charming thing was his delight over the work of a boy of sixteen—Brian Hatton, I think the name was. "I have shown it to Rivière; he is perfectly astounded," says Watts, "look at the instinct for beauty, look at the sheep lying in the grass, look at this child sitting in the twilight, it is like Sargent"

We met Mary Watts coming from the Flower Show, and called at the Holman Hunts. Then we stopped more omnibuses, and after Pinkie left me, a nun got into mine, a nice jolly woman, who told me she was from Hammersmith. Then a poor woman with the dropsy came in. I paid her fare, and the sympathetic old nun with her many crucifixes, escorted me across the road, seeing that I was frightened by the many wheels of fortune or misfortune.

A crowd of ladies in lace and diamonds, of gentlemen mostly in uniform with stars,<sup>1</sup> Richmond with his orders and his gold lace, Hester with a little veil over her head, I, agitated and befrizzed, glimpses of a lighted up house, a crowd, cheers, a royal carriage. We waited and waited and at last in weary despair walked away up the quiet back streets to that one, where we had made a league with the coachman. We followed a diplomat, covered with orders "That is the great Sir Thomas Sanderson, of the Foreign Office," said Richmond.

Next day we met the same crowd, but it had changed its clothes. It stood under the lovely trees at Osterley. The grass was like a psalm; it was so green, and so fine, so was the weather, so were the ladies, but the train was too tiring "Never more will I go by train," quoth the raven.

Sunday morning, lovely, but exhausting. Hester putting out the flowers, the doors and windows all open, cool and reposeful. Richmond calmly occupied, Billy invisible.

All the way to Rottingdean I was staring in wonder at the poppies. They blazed along the chalk downs and in places turned to violet, and then came massed dandelions and white celery, dazzling too, and then

<sup>1</sup> A party at Londonderry House.

gorgeous poppies again The beautiful shields of colour caught the light. I then found Lady Burne-Jones reading an old painted missal in her garden, where sweetness upon sweetness seemed floating The Church bell was ringing across the green, the birds were flying out to sea It was Sabbath weather, and is delicious to think about, and write down

As I left the Hotel, the old deaf gentleman came up. "What's the good of being Pope," says he, "if he fights so hard for life?"

"He may not be going to be Pope in the next world," says I

Hester and I drove by appointment to fetch Mr Nowlan, (the picture restorer,) whom we had promised to take to Leighton House I was touched to see how smart he had made himself with a beautiful shiny hat and neat gloves and shirt It seemed like Samuel Titmarsh over again As we drove down the shabby street our dear little man set to work to amuse us. He told us wild Irish stories, made gentle little jokes and recounted ancient histories, and when we reached Leighton House he jumped down and handed us out

Mrs Barrington in a hat and feathers, met us at the top of the stairs, and took us straight to the drawings which Nowlan had come to see and report upon There they were, those lovely designs and sketches, each delightful and suggestive, and half of them badly scarred and blotted with those spreading yellow spots of mold

Nowlan ceased to be Titmarsh when he was brought face to face with the drawings. He became the man of the hour. He was dreadfully busy, he said. He could not undertake a great deal, two pictures he eventually carried off, one desperately mottled girl's head, and the Florentine senator with the distracting marks across his nose. . .

One of the pictures there which always strikes me very much, is a terrific but admirably drawn head of Mrs Sartoris I remember her coming into a room once, when I was a girl, looking like this very picture She had "great blobs" as ornaments (so my father called them), she looked very noble and stately and alarming Leighton laughed and beamed in admiration "How beautiful," he said, and hurried to meet her

It is horrid, being old and remembering all these vanished visions as Ruskin says, some I like to dwell upon, others I try to forget. . . My last visit to Leighton was one Sunday, with his beautiful picture on the easel, of the Fawn teaching the boy to aim his arrow, and Leighton gay, courteous, laughing and telling me of his wonderful new Doctor, who had done so much for him. I am glad he never failed, glad his charming looks never left us (for people's looks are for others, like their kind welcomes and friendly greetings). I don't think I knew Leighton, but we were always friends, and I go on caring for him in that strange medley of death in life, in which elderly people are all living

It made me really happy to be able to do something for the drawings, and to bring our little fairy man, Nowlan, to save them from the moth and dust that corrupt. . .

*To Mary Millais*

109, St George's Square  
November 2 [1905]

Every day when I pass by, I look up at the veiled statue of your father<sup>1</sup> It stands well, and that is all that I can see. I shall take a wreath as soon as it is uncovered, from an old and lovingly admiring friend I shall take it under my cloak. He would

<sup>1</sup> The statue of Sir John Millais in front of the Tate Gallery.

think it absurd, but all the same I think it will be, for me, a gratifying and right thing to do, and there are so many guardians about, that it will not be allowed to lie and spoil.

Thank you for writing to me, and do come and see me when you get back.

*To Mary Millais*

109, St George's Square  
Nov 28 [1906]

Hester and I took our wreaths and placed them at the foot of your dear father's statue Sir Charles Holroyd wrote a nice letter, and said, "Thank you for the wreaths, they add a human touch to the monument to the great man we have so recently lost, to whose noble work we all owe so much" I think those were the words . I have stupidly mislaid Sir Charles' note, but I wanted to tell you I had done what I said.

This is the day my sister died, and it always seems to me a Saint's day.

*To Gerald Ritchie*

[May 1906.]

Your letter made me pipe my eye. It is so nice to be happy, and we all are at our Bill's happiness.<sup>1</sup> How I did like your description of him—my dear, dear boy, and now you have added to the happy *cairn* of hoping and kind blessing.

*To Mrs. Gerald Ritchie*

Gracedieu Manor  
Whitwick  
August 7 [1906]

I must tell you how the house is over-flowing with family and kindness<sup>2</sup> There are chauffeurs without

<sup>1</sup> Her son William Thackeray Denis' engagement to Margaret, second daughter of the Rt Hon Charles Booth, D C L, D Sc, F R S

<sup>2</sup> We were staying at Gracedieu, the Charles Booths' country house, for the marriage of my brother, which took place on August 8th

number and three or four motors, and the villagers come up for suppers and cricket matches. The "Foresters" on horseback with a band appeared this morning, followed by crowds who disperse across the cricket field and climb the slopes.

The household of Sir Thomas More is the only thing at all like it, and O! the kindness of it, and the gentleness and courtesy. They are the dearest people, and I wish you were here—how you would enjoy it, and how Peggy would enjoy it. She must have some wedding-cake.

I am taking it easy upstairs, and I hear the voices outside, and the cricket and the clappings through the window. I write this now, for the wedding is to be at 10.30 to-morrow morning and we go home in the evening. I shall keep back this letter until after the wedding of Mr and Mrs Denis Ritchie, and hope it will catch you before your start for France.

*To Mrs Gerald Ritchie*

[1906.]

Solomon (the cat) has been purring messages, tell Peggy. He purrposes to write, but he says it is superfluous to say how much he misses her and that he is perfectly lost without her to stroke his back. He has tried my lap but he doesn't much like it, he finds it too purpendicular and he sends his love purr me.

*To Reginald J. Smith*

109, St George's Square  
18th October [1906]

. . I forgot to say about the picture<sup>1</sup> that it doesn't convey very much to me. I remember Charlotte

<sup>1</sup> This portrait of Charlotte Bronte had been purchased by the National Portrait Gallery, doubts, however, were thrown upon its authenticity. My mother was appealed to, as one of the few people who could still remember Charlotte Bronte.

Brontë wore a dress of a little mossy *light green* pattern, she had no curls or loops such as ladies wore then—she did not look pleasant as she does in your picture, and I remember how she frowned at me whenever I looked at her, but perhaps it was specially at me—at least so I imagined. There was a general impression of *chin* about her face which doesn't show in this picture.

Light green as the colour of her dress I can swear to, and that interests me very much. I only saw her once, perhaps twice. I think the party and the dinner-party were the two occasions.

*To Mrs. W. W. Vaughan<sup>1</sup>*

109, St George's Square  
[1907]

Hester tells me how how kind you and Will have been and are being to her. I like to think of her in my old haunts. I was telling her how I used to write *Old Kensington* at Settle when I was a little older than she is now. How I wish you and Will had been born and had been living at Giggleswick in those days! I blush to say I have even forgotten my own books, but I had a Squire Anley who was Mr Birkbeck, whose joy it was to be mistaken for Tennyson. He used to wear a big hat and clothes made by a Swiss tailor-guide and he always walked like Robinson Crusoe with mysterious strides.

*To Emily Ritchie*

[1907]

I have been reading William James on Transcendentalism. Things *in* it I delight in, and I agree that one might get through life very well in a sort of balloon of Supereverythingness. His absolute want of the spirit of awe and holiness I dislike.

I go back to my father's religion. If I am to be

<sup>1</sup> Daughter of J. A. Symonds, wife of the present headmaster of Rugby

annihilated, I prefer, while I live, to love reverently. I don't want to live in a trance if I can help it, and, as Leslie used to say, annoyances make us wholesomely alive, so let us make the most of them. I haven't nearly done the book, so it is too soon to write about it

*To her Husband*

R M S *Tasso*<sup>1</sup>

Calm isn't the word, it is smoother, softer, serener than anyone could imagine Who wouldn't be at sea! The ship is full of lean elderly men who are all going to fish salmon, and who all look exactly alike There are two little Miss Bolithoes who talked to us in the train, one was taken ill and wept and then recovered. They know Florence and Constance Thackeray and are going to stay near Edith Cole. They asked me if I was Miss Thackeray? and I said, "No, I was Mrs Ritchie" and then as the ship had started, I told them I believed I would be Lady Ritchie to-morrow morning!

Hester and I are longing to see the Honours List with your biography, and to know who are the other K.C.B.'s.

While we were at dinner the Channel Fleet crowded with sailors passed by the port holes We sent you picture post-cards from Hull, anything less like Hull than the cards you can't imagine I never saw such a dismal city We walked and walked between shabby little houses and asked our way to the Tender, and presently like the Pilgrim's Progress up came a little man running who said, "Are you Mrs Ritchie? I wrote to you yesterday"

Lady Ritchie is getting rather twaddlesome! but we are most happy and comfortable and wish you were on board going to catch salmon.

<sup>1</sup> My mother and I were on our way to Norway to stay with Miss Edith Cole.

*To her Husband*

Lilledal, Sundalsoren  
Norway  
4th July, 1907

I send my love to you from this wonderful new world, it is like being *Eternal* for one instant, as you come into the heart of the great mountains and look and look It is so solemn one can hardly admire, and one finds oneself building an altar in spirit—and then by degrees kind every day comes in

Would that you were preparing to go out fishing with Hester You must bring her some year Your holiday would be twice as long, for one goes to bed quite fresh at midnight, and "gets up again quite brisk, and the perpetual daylight instead of bothering as I expected, becomes a sort of alabaster lamp-light—most healing and soothing. Hester is writing hard as well one may, when it takes a week for a letter to reach Please write back here the very moment you get this, for we leave on the 18th, which is just a fortnight off, and I think we shall give up Trondjem and return to Bergen, the birthplace of Ibsen and of *Lady Ritchie*!

Yesterday we floated in the Viking life-boat Next week Annie Cole<sup>1</sup> arrives, and, I hope, Miss Vivian We took a little private steamer and came straight here, instead of zigzagging up the fjord in the public boat all day in the pouring rain But though it rains it doesn't get into one's throat, and we arrived quite dry at the landing Our journey after leaving the steamer was the most adventurous of all, it was so rough the boat couldn't land Then a cart came out for us, and finally we walked up a fragrant hillside and arrived at a fragrant wooden chalet, with wood fires in deep stone chimneys, and comfortable chairs, and a dining room decorated with ornamental fish and old Norwegian cups, and the most exquisite dinner,

<sup>1</sup> Now Mrs Neville Chamberlain.

and dear Edith Cole—and two spacious pine bedrooms opening on to a gallery, and this noble new world all round about It is like Switzerland, but softer and bigger and not over-run The snow lies on the hills, there are seven waterfalls tumbling down the rocks The flowers and leaves and mosses are quite indescribable, Edith Cole has books of botany and knows them all She has an old attendant fisherman who goes about with her She calls him Ole, and I asked if this was his family name It is his Christian name, Ole, and his son is called Oleson, and so they go on, Billy would be Richmondson and his son would be Billyson, and so on for ever and ever

Good-bye, good-bye.

*To her Husband*

[1907]

We landed last night, after a delicious progress up the Fjord with a huge approving red moon looking at us over the tops of the rocky battlements. We made friends with a little old German music master, who had hurt his foot, and we gave him a lift in the carriage which we had telephoned for Our little German professor kissed both our hands at parting, and said that Ritchie was a "beruhmter" name We didn't go into it. (Did I tell you of the American young lady who burst into tears when I told her my father's name?)

It was 12 o'clock at night when we got here and the sky was a lovely faint rose colour, and the dawn was coming in yellow from that horrible place we had fled from, where we found the King of Siam and 400 tourists, and cross, exhausted, Norwegian maids and exasperated porters, and nothing to eat We got away in a little carriage from this nightmare of a place, and my heart sank into my boots as we came

down agonising precipices and waterfalls to the flatness again, and from the flatness to the fjord steamer here Our coachman down the precipice yesterday could only say, "All ri," and when I said, "Stop! let us get out," he said, "All ri," and cracked his whip of doom I can't draw it [picture] The rocks are like great Indian juggernauts, the waterfalls are really stupendous Then came the evening, and I trust our adventures are now over

*Husum*, and another astounding drive up cataracts, moraines, mighty stony places Dante isn't in it, or the Pyramids or any of the wonderful wonders The Harts met us along the road, among rocks and rushing rivers They were kindness itself, and much excited about you and delighted with your letter

They have been suggesting an expedition, but we have firmly said, "No!" A day's drive there, then three hours' walk, then the Laps with hundreds of reindeer The Norwegians are furious with the Laps because they are let off conscription. They only rush off to the ice-fields when they are called to enlist Mrs Hart says they are short little creatures, with a strut

*To her Husband*

Bergen  
1907

. . . *Haakon II*, the boat in which we came here, had a programme of the day at Bergen for the travellers, winding up with "at 11 o'clock the ship will sail and then for a jolly roll on the North Sea, home to old England"

We began with a "jolly roll" from Christiansund and at dinner we were put next the Captain, and found out that we had rashly slept going North, between Bergen and Christiansund, just when we should have been awake, while passing a certain defile, so Hester and I *got up* at 11.30 and hearing

four bells came on deck It was dim luminous twilight, the great rocks with pointed spires rose sheer up on either side, the end of the pass opened into floating opal Monte Rosas, and suddenly at a break in the great wall, a round red moon hung over a gigantic pass We had not seen it all the time at Lilledal, for the moon doesn't go so far North But I can't in the least tell you how magnificent it all was, we longed for you to see it, and wondered whether to rush in to the saloon and call all the people out from their Bridge, but while we were hesitating, the supreme moment was past

I shall be enchanted now to get home again and to face the North Sea and its "jolly roll" We had a most tremendous experience in the fjord with Edith Cole who sat calm and like a re-assuring rock with the elements thundering around us, and what I thought was a wave of the sea in my perturbation, was a flock of white gulls swooping over us Hester and I sat calm, but it was very impressive and when we landed I could hardly stand with excitement. As usual the whole population came down to see us land, and saw us off again the next morning I can't think how they have time The little boys here are much to the fore, dear merry natty little boys, who help to pull in the steamers and to carry the bags and who scull about in huge boats.

The dinner is over, first we had salt mince something, then soup, then boiled fish, then dishes looking like the map of Europe in different colours They cook very well indeed, and we get the most delicious tea. We look out on a really fine statue of Ole Bull standing playing in a fountain with a nixie coming up to listen Ole is pronounced Ulla I have thought of a little bit of a story

*To Lady Robert Cecil*

109, St George's Square  
October 1 [1908]

I was so much touched and interested to get your kind note—I puzzled and puzzled in my mind over Galsworthy and his problems. You put them so vividly and incisively that I couldn't forget them. I once saw his *Silver Box* which haunted me for days, it was all so exactly like some of the poor people I have met, but *not* exactly like the rich or the middling people. We are not good for much but we are good for something, and we *have* got souls, though Mr Galsworthy hardly recognises this fact.

Forgive me for sending you this note from a woman who has been 'an old angel, without wings alas' and only a bad leg to get about with for years, and who is now going off dignified and independent to the infirmary where she is sure to make friends and find something friendly to do and to say, and to enjoy. I first knew her looking after eight grandchildren—when one little grandchild died she nearly broke her heart.

Even Wordsworth doesn't stir my hope, as does such a generous unconscious life as this one, full of trial but brimful of tender affection. She has never begged or made phrases.

We are all artists sometimes, and we respond to the call of sincere and true things, and one has not to mind feeling a little desperate at others. You have life before you—I should like to feel a little clearer before I die, but I am sure you will write many many more true things that vibrate and reach your readers.

*To Mrs. G. F. Watts*

19th July [1908?]

I thought I had many more letters, but I can only find these three. I can never trust my own impres-

sions of place or of time or quantity—only I can feel the essence which is there and which does not vary If I find more letters I will send them These were in a book, the others must be scattered in those beloved packets of the past which I am, slowly sorting as I read them I think the Past somehow was not so *present* at the time as it is now Shall we ever look back at life somewhere in God's Kingdom to come? and thank Him with new thanks for all its wonderful blessings How much of what is the Holy Psalm of Life, your dear great Signor made clear from his place in God's Kingdom upon earth

*To Emily Ritchie*

Freshwater  
*Easter Sunday [1909]*

Swinburne is dead. Yesterday came a telegram from Watts-Dunton which was sad, sad to get As I said to Hester, the one thing which would be worse than death would be to live on and on after everyone one cared about had gone. The poor young poets, who shall I say?—Davidson, any of them—may die and I don't cry for them—but I did cry for Swinburne—who wrote *Atalanta* and the letter about James

The following letter from Swinburne is the one to which my mother refers —

*To Anne Ritchie from A. C. Swinburne<sup>1</sup>*

The Pines  
Jan. 22, 1908

DEAR LADY RITCHIE,—I do congratulate you cordially on being a grandmother To have a baby at hand or within reach is to belong to "the Kingdom of heaven" yourself I met this cold morning on my daily walk, a fair friend not yet "well stricken in" months, who beamed and chuckled inarticulately (being still by necessity "an inarticulate poet") at sight of me, from the depth of her pushwainling (I

<sup>1</sup> This letter is published by the kind permission of Messrs. Heinemann

hope you never use the barbaric word "perambulator"?) Don't you like the late Rev W. Barnes much better as a lexicographer (though I fear Miss Pinkerton might have demurred to his claims on that score) than as a poet? The happy term "pushwainling" for a baby's coach of state is what makes him immortal in my eyes.

Many thanks for sending me Miss Coleridge's poems. They are full of beauty and charm—a charm which does not belong to all beautiful writing and delicate execution. It is high praise—from me—to say that they often remind me of Mrs Shorter's (born Dora Sigerson) which I hope you know and admire as I do.

Sir Theodore Watts-Dunton belongs to the same order of creation as Mrs Harris. But Mr T W.-D. is none the less grateful for your so kindly misplaced congratulations

Ever sincerely and cordially yours,  
A. C. SWINBURNE

*To Anne Thackeray (in Rome)*

[1910.]

What a joy to get your letter and to think of you in Rome, the best place in all the world.

Stamp on the beloved ground for me, and drink a gulp of the waters of Trevi for me—and O, that shining toe in St Peter's! Minnie and I both kissed it in our excitement, and O the smell! and O the shine! and O the state of mind! Mind you never move without a shawl, and avoid chills and Roman fevers.

Did I tell you that they were thinking of bringing out a Centenary Edition of the Biographical Edition—probably two volumes at a time, beginning in November.

It will be a comfort when it is done. My memory

is a worry. I remember, but so slowly that it is most provoking and irritating

It's a good thing one didn't make oneself, *and* that one has to put up with being what one *is* and not what one might aspire to, like the German Emperor who imagines himself the voice of God

*To Emily Ritchie*

Freshwater

[1911]

Your words about Gussie<sup>1</sup> were very true and very heartfelt for me, for us I am glad you wrote. Last night in my dreams I was crying and crying about *Death*. Now that I am awake, I wonder what I cried for and why I minded so much, and now here is the daylight and the green fields and the sea from my window, and the wind-blown Freshwater trees.

. . I keep saying to myself about death what the Lieutenant on board the *Titanic* said, "It doesn't matter very much"

Thank God we have lived—and lived about the same time But my heart aches for you and for all of them

<sup>1</sup> The death of Mrs. Douglas Freshfield, May 26th, 1911

## XIII

1912—1919

ON October the 12th, 1912, my father died. Of the pain and sorrow of this time there is no need to speak. Those who were with her will never forget my mother's noble courage and constant thought for others in the midst of her own grief.

After a while we left the big house in St George's Square and went to live at 9, St Leonard's Terrace, Chelsea, that we might be near my brother and his wife.

*To Reginald F. Smith*

9, St Leonard's Terrace  
10th November [1913]

I am also writing to you about two memorials which belong to my life.

I want to send this guinea to dear Andrew Lang's memorial, I cannot remember where to apply, and I felt sure you would kindly help me.

If I have heard from Bishop Welldon,<sup>1</sup> and I am grieved I cannot help him. The few letters I kept of beloved Meta Gaskell's were loving greetings not for print, only the kindest and most tender personalities. They were *clasps* rather than letters, in that lovely handwriting of hers.

Last night I saw Miss Broughton, who said to me "I hear you have a new book coming out," and I said, "You shall most certainly have a copy!"

<sup>1</sup> A proposed memoir of the Misses Gaskell.

Yet one more thing I have to ask you On Wednesday next there is a meeting of the Literary Fund If you are able, will you go there and please support poor Mrs —, she is left with *nothing* but her good courage I am hoping enough may be granted to pay for the funeral and also to keep her through these first sad months.

All this do not please trouble to answer for I know you will respond with or without writing

*To Lady Battersea*

9, St Leonard's Terrace  
[1913]

How kind of you to write, and how pleasant it is to hear a friend's voice come out of the envelope— it is nearer than a printed page!

My printed page<sup>1</sup> has done very well, and is going into a second edition I liked putting the scraps together, re-writing some of them and thinking of the beloved past It seems so great a boon to live back again

Let me know when you come up, and either come to luncheon or let me come to you one evening. Lunching out doesn't suit me somehow, but tea or dinner I should gratefully accept I am very well on the whole, and except for sadness I am happy in a way. The children are away but they will soon be back I want to say to you, dear Connie, that it was an ache to me when Blanche Lindsay died, all the more that I felt I had not gone as often as I might, but one gets so soon tired when one is my age. All the same it made me grieve to feel this, and to think how kind she had always been.

<sup>1</sup> Her book, *From the Porch*.

*To Lady Bell*

9, St Leonard's Terrace  
Dec 31st [1913]

Hearing of you through Antonia Macnaghten and Imogen, makes me want to cross pens, shake nibs, hit you with a piece of paper to attract your attention!

Here is a nice game! one person (it or she) sits down with a bit of paper and some dark-coloured fluid, with which she traces your name, also those near and dear to you, and to herself too. Then she thinks (she needn't speak), "Old friends" and remembers "all sorts of things" as Betsinda used to say. Then the game isn't over, the other side nods back to you in a friendly way.

In July, 1914, Mr. Sargent made a beautiful portrait of my mother to which the following letters refer. The drawing was made at the request of her friends, who afterwards presented her with the picture.

This letter from Henry James tells the story.

*Henry James to Anne Ritchie*

21, Carlyle Mansions  
June 30, 1914.

DEAREST ANNE, admirable old Friend and illustrious Confrère!—It is altogether delightful to think that this happy thought of your likeness being "took" by our all-responsive and all-ready Sargent is on the way to be effectively arranged, for such a Public Treasure shall the work appear destined to become, if all goes well with it.

The happy thought sprang up in the breasts of the Protheros—to them alone I more than suspect belongs the grace of having first thrown it off. I doubt whether it will seem wise to invite you to take your place on the sitter's throne before the autumn—the reason of this being that all your friends of every

size and shape ought to have the chance to join in the demonstration according to their ability I have taken the liberty of urging that consideration out of the depth of my own experience—my heart was so wrung by the plaints of those who had not been notified by my two or three acting friends when Sargent turned out *my simulacrum!*<sup>1</sup> The lament of those who had been unknowingly overlooked distressed me almost more than the pleasure of the others gratified, and I should wish for you that everyone without exception who would like to add a pebble to your cairn shall have been communicated with, which is in course of being seen about

I rejoice for you meanwhile that you are not sweltering with us here in the heavy Cockney heat, but sitting, I hope, in the flutter of the Porch, and getting better of the indisposition of which you speak Porches and airy flutters do me more good than anything in the world when I (more ponderously) droop—and even as I write this I am almost hanging out of my 4th floor window into the stuffy darkness of our Thames-side, praying for a stir in the night that doesn't come Don't exchange your headland over the deep for this sorry state without due circumspection You have written me a most beautiful and touching note, and only this hell-broth of the great London social Pot has kept me from thanking you for it more instantly,

Have patience with us all and believe me your stoutest and fondest old adherent

HENRY JAMES

*To Mrs. George Prothero<sup>1</sup>*

The Porch  
Freshwater Bay

[June 1914]

I can only send my loving, grateful, spiritual hug to you, for your amazing thought to give me pleasure

<sup>1</sup> Now Lady Prothero

and content and pride and delight The feel of it all—the kindness—has cured me I do believe of my attack of illness, and as long as I am alive and well, I shall feel all the more alive, for having been made a *Sargent* in the army of—occupation?—appreciators of what is fine—I don't know what to call it.

I shall be home on the 3rd for a week or two, and I may come back here for part of August

Will you come to tea on the 4th or any day convenient to you? Mr Sargent says Tuesday the 7th for my sitting

Naturally enough my first thought was how pleased Richmond would have been—and my father—and sister—as for my dear family it is radiant

*To Mrs. George Prothero*

9, St Leonard's Terrace  
9 July [1914]

I have just come away from Sargent's studio. It is the most lovely, *fine* picture—I can't tell you how I have loved the gift, the givers and the devisers, or how I have enjoyed the sittings I could only tell Mr Sargent that I thought that when I came away, the picture itself would—could thank him for me

I am sure it ought to thank you, sweet and kind enchantress, who has devised all this and your husband and kindest Henry James I write now for I am going to Freshwater to-morrow, if I can I shall come late to-night or early to-morrow to see you a minute before I start

*To Rhoda Broughton*

9, St Leonard's Terrace  
July 30 [1914]

It really is an enchanting picture. I am more touched and interested and grateful than ever

I went for another sitting yesterday and he said I like your bonnet so much, may I add it? and so my poke bonnet is there supreme

1914] SUBSCRIBERS TO THE PORTRAIT 285

I am asking the photographer to send you a photograph of my picture to say thank you for me better than I can myself . . . I feel quite shy before my portrait it is *so human*, and I feel so like it, yet more *grim alas!*

Your devoted, indebted and grateful  
A T R.

*To the Friends who gave the Portrait*

Such a beautiful gift is almost beyond any poor thanks of mine It has come bringing gracious sympathy and comfort and kindness—May others find the same help in their lives as that which has been given me and mine!

With a grateful heart I sign myself  
ANNE THACKERAY RITCHIE

August 11, 1914

*M. F Prothero to the Subscribers*

24, Bedford Square,  
August, 1914

The following is a list of the subscribers to the portrait of Lady Ritchie, by Mr John Sargent —

Blanche Airlie	Mary Booth
J M Barrie	Stopford A. Brooke
Constance Battersea	Rhoda Broughton
Florence Bell	Katharine Bruce
Hugh Bell	Marion Bryce
Gertrude Bell	Annie F. Chamberlain
Hugo Bell	Basil Champneys
Maurice Bell	Lucy Clifford
Arnold Bennett	Eleanor Clough
Mary Benson	T. J Cobden-Sanderson
Augustine Birrell	Edith Cole
Eleanor Birrell	Louise Creighton
George M Booth	Margaret Creighton
Margaret Booth	J W. Cross

H E Cunningham	Susan Lushington
H S Cunningham	Elizabeth Mathew
Ariana R W. Curtis	Alexandra Micholls
Lionel Cust	Bella Middleton
Sybil Cust	Peggy Middleton
Elizabeth Darwin	Monteagle
Horace Darwin	Claude Montefiore
Ida Darwin	Eveleen Myers
W E. Darwin	Helen Shore Nightingale
M Llewelyn Davies	L H Shore Nightingale
W H Deverell	Emily Norman
A V Dicey	Philip Norman
E M Dicey	Richard Norton
Emma Du Maurier	Bessie Olliffe
Arthur D Elliot	Frances M Paley
K E Farrer	Charles E. Perugini
Jane Fletcher	Kate Perugini
E H Flower	Pierpoint Morgan
Douglas W. Freshfield	Frederick Pollock
May E. Gordon	Georgina H. Pollock
W Wilson Greg	Dighton Probyn
Anstey Guthrie	Barbara Prothero
Elizabeth Haldane	G W Prothero
Sophie V Halsey	M. F. Prothero
Florence Henniker	Emily Wyndham-Quin
Alicia Eliza Hill	Mary Rawlinson
Mrs W. H Hughes	W. G. Rawlinson
Bernard Holland	Clara Richmond
Augusta Julia Huth	Elsa Richmond
T G. Jackson	Adelheid Robertson
Henry James	Elizabeth Robins
Peggy James	Elizabeth A. Rodd
Ellen Joachim	Rosebery
Rose Lamb	Alys Russell
Walter Leafe	Margaret of Sarawak
Constance Leslie	Louisa Lee Schuyler
H E Litchfield	Georgina Lee Schuyler
Anne Low	Adela Schuster

Walter N Senior	Herbert Stephen
Edith Sichel	Katharine Stephen
Eleanor M Sidgwick	Lisa Stillman
Constance Hugh Smith	Marie Stillman
Alick Murray Smith	Jane Strachey
Elizabeth Murray Smith	Howard Sturgis
Ethel Murray Smith	Tennyson
E T Murray Smith	Charles Tennyson
Elizabeth Babington-Smith	Ivy Tennyson
Henry Babington-Smith	Mary Trevelyan
L Pearsall Smith	Margaret Vaughan
Isabel M. Smith	W. W. Vaughan
Reginald J. Smith	Josephine Ward
Agnes Spring-Rice	M. S. Watts
Cecil Spring-Rice	Margaret Woods
Georgina Spring-Rice	Annie Yorke
Maude Stanley	

The portrait has been completed, and sent to Lady Ritchie. A silver inkstand and a pair of candlesticks with the following inscription "Presented to Anne Thackeray Ritchie by her friends, August, 1914," have also been given her, together with a cheque for the residue of the subscriptions, to be used as she may desire.

M. F. PROTHERO

*To Miss Lee Schuyler, New York*

Tadworth

Surrey

9th Sept [1914]

Your letter came last night and I loved it, for I felt that if you were here, you could not enter more completely into all that this awful experience of war brings into our life. I long for Richmond every hour, and feel if he were only here, he could help more than anyone. Strangely enough when Sir James Dunlop Smith (the Military Attaché at the India Office) went

there the other day, going from room to room trying to help my nephew Arthur Ritchie to get to the Front, he said wherever he went, whoever he saw, each said, "If only Richmond Ritchie were here! Nobody could give such good counsel as he"

My part is waiting and doing London is too moving and agitating to stay in, the garden in front of our house is full of soldiers and horses. The friendly *bore*s who are left stranded, are impossible to avoid, the people we care for are away, and with this awful strip of news coming in, I felt I must *touch* Hester and join her at Tadworth

Arthur Ritchie is gone Charles Thackeray is drilling morning, noon and night They are all so cheery, so full of honour and noble courage, that it is as much thank God in one's heart, as horrible dismay I can only pray for peace, that peace which passeth all understanding.

Give my love to Georgie How can I ever say what pleasure my *beautiful* testimonial<sup>1</sup> gave to me. It came just before this horrible thunderbolt How dear it was of you both to subscribe, any money over will enable me to give your help and others—kind people—to the wives and children of the soldiers at the front It is appalling to hear of the thousands of refugees from Belgium and France arriving every day, but everyone is helping.

It warms my heart to know that you in America realise the truth—the lies the Germans publish are fantastic. I am well, only troubled at heart

*To Mrs. George Prothero*

9, St Leonard's Terrace  
[January 30, 1915]

O what a delight! After being bombed out of our sleep, defrauded of Billy and Meg at dinner, then befogged out of a morning's meeting with the grand-

<sup>1</sup> Her portrait by Sargent.

children, generally rubbed up the wrong way, I come down to see a little parcel waiting which I open with languid interest and lo! Peace, Pleasure, Plenty surround us all, your grateful friend in particular, whose ways you smooth and shine upon Thank you, thank you, dear Fanny, and once more I feel in a gentler mood, and once more it is you I thank, and am yours affectionately and over again gratefully,

ANNE RITCHIE

*To Rhoda Broughton*

The Old Vicarage  
Ware  
*May Day [1915]*

Songs of Birds Opening chorus—then solo by distinguished performers, Signor Cuckoo and others. Then general burst of specialists

Audience—daffodils, young vegetables and myriads of little buds

I wish you were here, my dearest Rhoda. The square comfortable house seems like a palace—the entrance is so pretty, first across a field with Caldecott views, then a hill, and behold The Old Vicarage with its weather-cock windows

Ware itself is exactly like Caldecott's John Gilpin, he must have come here to do the pictures

. . . I want to tell you of our afternoon with Charles Lamb One could almost see him standing by his "grand-dame's" grave in Widford Churchyard Lady Buckmaster took us and she showed us the house Charles Lamb used to go to, such a quaint, prim, dim little house, all overgrown by trees and creepers, but the owner will only let it to people who will sign a promise to cut nothing down, and nobody will agree to this, so the house is turning into *one* large laurel bush, like Daphne wasn't it?

Then we had tea under the apple-trees in Lady Buckmaster's garden, where Charles Lamb used also

to go There was an American lady who so adored him that last year she came over with her intended to be married at Widford Church, and the pew-opener gave her away

It was the strangest combination of Elia and us, and the hundreds of soldiers from their billets, and the hospital close by, and a lonely drive home in the sunset

*To James Bain*

The Old Vicarage  
August 23rd [1915]

I owe you a real, great pleasure and interest and emotion reading the life of that dear and wise person Alexander Macmillan and getting still more to know him and enjoying his presence once again.

The life is indeed admirably done, how many familiar voices speak out of its pages Perhaps none more familiar than your's, dear Mr. Bain, kind friend as you have ever been

I am reading Sir Alfred Lyall, and that clever, clever novel of Arnold Bennett's *Whom God Hath Joined* He has discovered how interesting uninteresting things and people are

. Everything is so sad and unnatural, that to fly away into one's youth and the youth of one's friends and companions is the best calmer and comforter. I wish you could get younger and younger, and I too ! and that one could go off via childhood again

*To Rhoda Broughton*

9, St Leonard's Terrace  
Sep 30 [1915]

What a blessing a friend is on a day like this, to light up the darkness and cheer up the damp and be an umbrella to ward off the rain ! and I bring down a book,<sup>1</sup> (short and well printed to read in) and as I

<sup>1</sup> *Old Friends* by Andrew Lang.

open it I come upon a dedication to Miss Broughton and a kind little inscription. "To Mrs. Richmchd Ritchie with the author's best wishes and apologies" He has certainly made me laugh out, even, on a day like this Mrs Casaubon's letter to Belinda is the funniest of them all I think Dear Andrew Lang!

We are going a little sooner than we intended, there are always 2,000 little reasons and unreasons for what one does Last night in the middle of the night I remembered I hadn't set the drawing-room clock and came down accordingly Early this morning Hester was struck by the same idea and she also put the clock an hour back. Then came Ada, the cook, who had forgotten all about summer time, crying out against the milk and baker and the paper boy I don't know where we are any more, and what is expected of us by coupon or otherwise.

The clock says three-thirty, it is growing darker and darker, is it five-thirty? Please when you write tell me what o'clock it is, and I am your loving

ANNE RITCHIE

So poor Mrs Cramb is relieved from her dreary experience of life, she wrote me a nice letter not long ago.

*To Charles P Johnson*

The Old Vicarage  
Jan 22nd [1916]

It was very cold and quite dark when Billy arrived, and after he had had his tea and settled down by the fire, he said, "Now children," and they rushed away and came back bringing in the hamper and opening the lid, and lo! there were the beautifully bound books<sup>11</sup> Did any authoress in her old age ever see such a droll, touching sight as her beloved grand children, and Belinda in particular, eagerly turning

<sup>11</sup> A complete set of my mother's books in first editions given by Mr Johnson to his god-daughter, Belinda Ritchie

over the leaves of all her past days, exclaiming at the pictures, and obediently putting the books down when their father cried, "Beware of fingers"?

What a kind, old friendly God-paternal thought, what an apotheosis for my life-long chatter to find itself so kindly honoured and decorated

I hardly knew which were the grandchildren and which were my stories, so much of the past was written in each one of my books And Walker's lovely drawings and George Leslie's and Mrs Allingham's illustrations all seemed alive too, and thank you and thank you, dear Mr Johnson. Richmond would have been so glad for Belinda, and responsive and pleased for me

You have given me the order of the Pen—the ancient Pen—and I shall send you the order of the K. T not Thistle, but Kind Thought!

• *To Miss Lee Schuyler, New York*

9, St Leonard's Terrace  
Dec 13<sup>th</sup> [1916]

Do not be alarmed by Miss Bosanquet's beautiful typing<sup>1</sup> I see her blush! I have had letters from her which she used to indite for dear Henry James, and now that my eyes are rather groggy I do enjoy the luxury of talking to a friend instead of blotting my affection

I am going to get another opinion about my eyes One doctor said I had decided cataract coming on Another said I hadn't. I have heard of a third, whose address I have unfortunately lost, who cures cataract by reading three hours a day, which will suit me very well. When I have found the third doctor's address I will let you know what he says

I am glad we are not at war with you, but I wish your President while preserving peace, had found a

<sup>1</sup> This letter was dictated to Miss Bosanquet at the typewriter

word of indignant flame for the organised horrors the Germans have perpetrated, not in fair fight. Better would it be for them that a millstone could be tied to their heads—a million millstones. How dare the Germans talk of the Peace of God, while perpetrating their bloodthirsty attacks on Belgium and Poland, and accuse unprepared England and France!

I wonder if you are installed in your new home? Your letter came the very day of your move, and our love will find you out. I delight to think of all the honours and dignities, my dear, which pursue you wherever you go.

I have just read your beautiful preface<sup>1</sup>. The concluding paragraphs go to my very heart. You were moved to true eloquence, and to the song of the Heart when you wrote this last and most lovely *grace*. A bit of sunshine indeed, a sound of running waters.

I am writing to you in a thick damp fog, I sat down dispirited, feeling how incapable old age is to come and go, to help others, to be grateful for the innumerable blessings of life, and as I read your Introduction I forgot everything but your dear and noble words flowing on, and the example set to others by those who have kept on clear and serene to the very end. It is a *treasure* in life to count on such a friendship as ours, and when we are both promoted—we shall have had this best possession, ("Le meilleur de tout est un ancien ami," says Victor Hugo) and whether we are 50,000 years old or 80 or 30, as we were when first I loved you—thank God for his blessings in this life.

*To Edmund Candler (in Mesopotamia)*

9, St Leonard's Terrace  
Feb 16th [1917]

What interest your kind letter rouses in us all! I have nothing to add to your friendly and most un-

<sup>1</sup> An Introduction written by Miss Lee Schuyler to *Recollections of a Happy Life* by A. C. Hobson

expected studies,<sup>1</sup> and if you quote anything out of my letter please let it be that I know it would greatly touch my father that at such a time and under such circumstances, you should find rest in the good company of his books I remember he told me that when Sebastopol fell, a *Vanity Fair* pierced by a bullet was picked up in one of the barrack rooms, and now after more than fifty years the story is heroically repeated

. . . Except for a friend who sent him an occasional turkey, I cannot remember any connection that my father had with Norfolk, and I am ashamed to say, that until I read your letter I had never realised the presence of the Bungays in his writings It will be most sympathetic to find your notes in the *Cornhill* —and thank you for writing and believe me,

Your grateful reader,  
ANNE RITCHIE.

*To her grand-daughter, Belinda*

April 30th [1917]

MY DARLING LINNY,—It is eight o'clock and here is my breakfast and for a treat *butter* instead of margarine I have read my Psalm for the day, it is one I like, "One generation shall praise Thy works unto another and declare Thy power" I am one generation, your father and mother are another, and you a third, and a very nice one too, say we grandparents. Some of your generation are rather wild There is a nice little boy here called Oliver Woods, and a nice little girl at Farringford called Anne, and Oliver says to *his* grandmama, "Do you think Anne ought to thump little children she doesn't know?" So all the grandmothers say, "Certainly not" Anne has not got a grandmama to teach her manners, only a kind old Nurse who cannot catch

<sup>1</sup> An article on Thackeray

her up when she runs about I am so glad, that none of you "thump children you don't know when you meet them," but I must say Anne rushes up to me not thumpingly but with her little arms put.

Bless you darling Belinda Give the second generation and the third generation hugs from the first generation

My first is a letter of the Alphabet  
My second is part of one's legs  
My third is very small and tiresome  
but necessary during the war,  
to keep my whole alive

*To Mrs Charles Thackeray*

The Old Vicarage

[1917]

Hester is going down to telegraph our pleasure and delight over the new Director of Submarines.<sup>1</sup> Oh that he on sea and our Colonels on land may set us free from this loathsome Kultur !

I wish, how I wish, I could be cut up into four active young women of twenty to come and go I should like wings to fly with, and intelligence to know what might be of use.

I always come back to Belinda's wish, "God only made me a little girl, and not a fairy as I should have liked," and he has made me an old woman to send you my love

All the poor Yeomanry are clanking about utterly disconsolate. Their horses have been taken and there they are left with their saddles and bridles on their own backs They can't even get their food in, which comes from a distance, and the poor elderly Majors are condemned to bicycles

<sup>1</sup> Captain (now Rear Admiral) W W Fisher, C.B., M.V.O., R.N., appointed Director of Anti-submarine Division Admiralty.

*To her grand-daughter, Catherine*



THIS SWEET CATHERINE  
IS MY VALENTINE

---

*To Thomas Hardy*

The Porch  
Freshwater, Isle of Wight  
July 24 [1917]

I have just finished *The Dynasts* with awe and with absolute admiration. It is a relief for my excitement to write to you and I feel as if I were one of your spirits speaking. I have almost forgotten the war for a day or two, in wonder at your inspired history of now, written in 1907.

Are our poor, poor grandchildren to go through it all again? Let them read *The Dynasts* and have chained copies fixed up in every home.

How Leslie, how my sister would have admired, as does yours sincerely and sadly and gladly too for many things

ANNE RITCHIE.

*To her grandson, James,*

9, St Leonard's Terrace  
November 2nd [1917]

Your birthday is getting very near This is nine thirty o'clock on Nov 2 and the soldiers are sounding their go-to-bed-horns and I am sending you my love. I remember that all the squibs and crackers were sounding and going off on Guy Fawkes Day when you were born, ten years ago, is it possible it is ten years already? I am so glad to hear the cake went right this time I shall send one once a month, and please give George Ritchie a slice for his name's sake

We had squibs and crackers and banging and thundering on Wednesday night<sup>1</sup> Hester and I came down to the drawing-room and Hester fetched a rug and we poked up the fire It was a lovely moonlight night I have been having drives in a bath chair these last few days A nice little boy called Whitworth who is living next door came to speak to me yesterday as I got out of my chariot, and I invited him in to have a ride on the rocking horse, he seemed surprised that a quite old lady like me should keep a rocking horse and I had to explain that it was for my grandchildren and small nephews and nieces—most of them are away to be out of the raids.

Darling James, God bless you, and I am your loving loving

GRANDMAMA.

I have been writing about a hospital and I hope they will print my letter in the *Spectator* and that some money may come to help my friends the nurses

<sup>1</sup> An air-raid over Chelsea.

*To Mrs Herbert Paul*

The Porch  
[January 1918]

I wish we could all be at our best all our life long, instead of the contrary so very often. What makes me happy is that I think I have discovered at last, that wrong and failure and irritation and selfishness are part of the texture of life, not the Devil nor the Hun so much as the very condition of existence, but that with all this comes God, the Spirit of good, walking on the face of the waters, and making bad things into peace, goodwill and courage.

*Journal 1918*

The Old Vicarage

June 30th "I am an old man, who lived thro' many fears and troubles, most of which never happened at all" And this most assuredly applies to me! Billy told me the little history just now, when I said I felt like the old woman in the fairy tale who sat weeping in the cellar for fear the mallet should fall on her future grandson's head. Little Belinda wondered what we were talking about. She is reading her book beside me in a garden chair, and Billy is digging at the weeds. Now and again a young bird up in a tree gives a little mid-day croak. The flowers seem to give an extra flash of colour in the gleam of the sun, the little dog rolls over on his back and stretches out his paws. distant poultry cluck from beyond the hedge and a fly buzzes across my paper. Kind minute, tranquil peaceful hour, for which I can still thank God, before I go my way.

---

*To Mrs. Gerald Ritchie*

The Porch, de mon Coin  
Autumn [1918]

We had a delightful journey, friendly young soldiers, (not too many of them) who lunched with us off our sandwiches and buns—We had a dream of a

crossing, grey soft skies parting to show blue of every faint and shining depth, and finally Miss Gillan and the motor to meet us

I have been thinking of my *dear* month in London and all the friendly people, things, meetings and not the least my Miggs and my Nan and all their loving-kindness

I found on arriving the book from Mr Murray with the Sartoris article which will do very well indeed There is such a funny letter from Mr. Brookfield quoted in it He asks that two pair of shoes he forgot at Warnford may be returned to him. He says as it is Lent nobody is surprised to see him going about with bare feet but that it will look odd at Easter!

I have seen nobody yet except the caretaker and the cat both so overjoyed to see us that it made me feel quite ashamed

I am so engrossed by all the things I have to think about, and the news and the peace one is longing for that I feel as if the room was crowded with hopes and blessed realisations too There was a little pile of the *Echo de Paris* awaiting us, giving the French quick, definite accounts of the advance each day

Hester has also settled down, and we had a delicious little fire, chiefly sticks we had picked up and brought in from the shore.

*To her grand-daughter, Maisie*

The Porch  
November [1918].

MY DARLING MAISIE,—I have not written to you for a long time and I think I must write to-day.

It is raining, I want it to leave off for we are going for a long drive if it is possible Yesterday was so beautiful it seemed to make one *fly* with joy and when I thought of Peace coming it made me say my prayers of thanks.

Last night Nelly Elias read out loud how the English came to Lille and how the happy free people cheered and cheered and waved flags and kissed the English out of gratitude. It was delightful reading and it almost made one cry to think of their happiness poor things. This morning I met James and Rachel Tennyson<sup>1</sup> picking up sticks for the fire, and I told them about Peace coming. James laughed and said "I am a crocodile," and I don't think he understood. They come running to meet me just as you do, and I always think of you all when I see them.

How happy we shall be when we go to meet you at Yarmouth, and the steamer comes up with you all on board, and then we shall trot home. Daddy must draw a picture of you all in the coach, for I never can draw horses, not even a donkey can I draw. Do try and learn to draw horses and donkeys too. It will be useful when you are a grandmama.

The one over-fed animal here is Miss Gillan's donkey which goes off at a hand-gallop and is—terrific—and won't ever stop on the way. The Government have forgotten to cut down his oats, and he has more to eat than any of the horses, and that is why he is so fresh. I do hope you will have a donkey some day, but not quite such a velocipede as this one.

Goodbye, my darling granddaughter

*To her Daughter-in-law*

The Porch  
[1918]

I cannot tell you how happy your letter made me. It was like suddenly going up in the air to hear of you all.

Who has sent me a beautiful flower which open is a parasol and which folded is a useful support, and which to look at is a pleasure? It comes from Peter—Jones—Robinson—one of them. It arrived by post and is a mystery.

<sup>1</sup> Great-grandchildren of the Poet

I would have taken it to vote with, but it was pouring lions and tigers. At the voting booth we displeased a clerk I said, "I hope I have done it all right" He said severely, "This is vote by ballot, you have no business to show your paper" Why Hester and I have each a vote I do not know, —anyhow we both stepped behind the screen and both voted Coalition, and Hester grins and says now we counterbalance A—, and Sir F— who has travelled all the way from London to give his vote to Sir Godfrey Baring

The taxi took us off at two o'clock, so we escaped a crowd, and the disapproval of the Court was concentrated on my undignified behaviour. There were about twenty people sitting in a double row and our neighbour, the tall policeman

Dear, have you got back? Have I ever told you how your *butter* eased the wheels of life when Adèle arrived very hungry.

Ever your loving,  
VOTARINA

*To her Daughter-in-law*

The Porch  
[1918]

We have had a great deal of weather the last few days. The wind whistles and scrimmages, the water washes, the storm is everywhere, and I feel all anyhow, and only wonder what I ought to do?—*Nothing* is the best answer.

On Saturday night Hester called me to come out on her balcony and look at the moon The moon was red, very red and angry, and quite round and galloping along into a great cloud

Since writing all this the storms are over and gone, and I wish I could pack up all the breath off the downs and all the light off the sea, and the beautiful sight Hester and I have been watching, six fine pairs of cart-horses dragging ploughs along the great field

Leading down to the Bay, the old men driving them  
and a little bit of a boy with fair hair leading one of  
them I said to Hester, "Well done, James" She  
laughed The little boy turned sharp round, and  
stared His name must have been really James.

Beloved daughter-in-law  
Farewell and Bless you

*To Lucy Broadwood*

The Porch  
*December 4 [1918]*

How grateful I feel for your letter As I read it,  
I seemed to be listening again with Richmond to  
your music Your words came to me like a song  
sounding through the door of the past

. Ryde is a very long way from Freshwater, but  
I will look and see how the trains fit, with longer  
day-time there may be possibilities, and as Peace  
grows there may be luncheons fit to offer, and we  
could as you know—(anyhow Hester could) show the  
way to Farringford.

One thing about you still often haunts me, which  
is that somewhere on the lawn of The End House  
your beautiful diamond is hidden away

Another thing I shall hate to think of, is that you  
may be leaving your kind nest where we have all  
sheltered in turn I have to stay more and more by  
my own fireside, but I think the quieter old people  
keep, the more their spirits roam and fly

*To Mrs. Gerald Ritchie*

The Porch  
*[Dec 1918]*

Have you read Macaulay's life lately? I  
cannot tell you how I have enjoyed reading it and  
my father walks in and out of it in the most amusing  
way

There is a story of the Zoo, two ladies visiting the  
newly arrived hippopotamus. My father hears one

say to the other "That is the way in, and Oh! there is Lord Macaulay coming *out*—which would you rather see?" First Lady, "Lord Macaulay,—never mind the hippopotamus," and they rush after Lord Macaulay. Later on he meets my father, who tells him of the conversation, which he (Lord M) says is the greatest compliment he ever received.

. . . Pelman tells Hester not to misuse the priceless gift of imagination picturing troubles, but to go higher, and he is quite right—not picturing impossible rainbows but accepting I always go back to "Sing sorrow, sing sorrow, triumph the good"

*To A. B. S Tennyson*

The Porch

16th December [1918]

To our great pleasure the enchanting portrait of Clemenceau has arrived, shrewd, courageous Clemenceau able to hold his own, to wave that hat to the delight of all London, and to give a cachet to our modest home! We have pinned the admirable picture up by the door, and we proudly show it to your family and our visitors. Yesterday we had a tea party, most agreeable and successful "Crackers, Oh and scones!" says James, approvingly. James asked about M Clemenceau and I said he was a very good old man who had helped the French and brought about Peace and made us all very happy "He hasn't made me very happy," says James; so I say, "Oh, yes, he has, he has made your Mama happy, and helped to bring your Daddy back from the War" "But he hasn't made me happy," says Rachel. She was quite convinced, however, when we assured her he had

*To Mrs. Gerald Ritchie*

6th January [1919].

If you think my letter *cold*, it is the weather not I! The great event of this week has been reading

Mrs Barnett's book!<sup>1</sup> How good it is! How fine he is, and how well she tells the story of his generous, beautiful life. Some parts made my tears break out unexpectedly.

I simply laughed out loud when I read of Herbert Spencer with his umbrella in the desert beating the donkey boy. His brown kid gloves, his tie, his umbrella! How well I can see him at Wykehurst tripping angrily along the terrace. I told you he had been ordered rest and to travel with unintellectual people, and he asked if he might join us as he thought we should not tire his brain in any way!

*To her Daughter*

15 January [1919].

All yesterday I was tearing up old letters, and it seemed like living through the past once more and parting from it all again. I felt the beloved rush of the *tempest* of life, to which I still seem to belong, far more than to *now*.

Who says, "Youth's a stuff will not endure"? It lasts as long as we do, and is older than age. For those moments of eager life of seeing and being come back to us, and we babble of green fields and live among them to the very end.

<sup>1</sup> The *Life of Canon Barnett*

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Anne Thackeray Ritchie died at Freshwater on February 26th, 1919 A tablet to her memory in the village church has the following inscription :—

Her writing reveals the inheritance of genius.  
Her life the inspiration of loving kindness

## CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF LADY RITCHIE'S BOOKS

- 1863 The Story of Elizabeth  
1867 The Village on the Cliff  
1868 Five Old Friends and a Young Prince  
1869 To Esther and other Sketches  
1873 Old Kensington  
1874 Toolers and Spinsters  
1875 Miss Angel  
1876 Introduction to "The Orphan of Pimlico," by W M Thackeray  
1880 Introduction to the "Life of Anne Evans"  
1881 Life of Madame de Sevigné  
1881 Miss Williamson's Divagations  
1883 A Book of Sibyls  
1885 Mrs Dymond  
1887 Little Esme's Adventure (a story for children)  
1891 Introduction to "Cranford"  
1892 Records of Tennyson, Ruskin and Browning  
1892 Introduction to "Madame d'Aulnoy's Fairy Tales"  
1893 Introduction to "Our Village"  
1893 Introduction to "Lord Tennyson and his Friends"  
1894 Chapters from Some Memoirs.  
1894 Life of Lord Amherst (in conjunction with Richardson Evans)  
1895 Introductions to the following books by Miss Edgeworth  
Popular Tales.  
*Ormond.*  
Castle Rackrent and the Absentee  
Helen  
1898 Biographical Introductions to the Biographical Edition of  
W. M Thackeray's Works 13 vols  
1908 Blackstick Papers  
1911 Biographical Introductions to the Centenary Edition of  
W. M Thackeray's Works 26 volumes.  
1913 From the Porch.  
1919 From Friend to Friend (published posthumously)

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